1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Purification of the land when some one is Sold: When a person sells
567 a son or a brother, he may not tell the *Ten'dan'*, nor will the latter take
783 any notice, but sooner or later some misfortune will befall the vendor,
793 or some of his family, and on consulting the *bay* (soothsayer) he will be
●593 informed that his having sold some one is the cause; he will be advised to give a cow, sheep, or goat to the *Ten'dan'*. He will give the offering to the land, saying: 'My father, there was a famine, and some one sold his own son, and he has brought these things. Receive them and prevent headache and belly-ache, and give them to the land.'

769 I asked my informant why he used his father's spirit as an inter-
793 mediary. He replied, 'My ancestor knew the land before myself; all
783 our ancestors are in the ground, which is a *bagere*' (shrine).

Duties of the Ten'dan' in Connexion with the Making of a New Farm:
793 The man about to make a new farm will sacrifice to his ancestor through
782 the head of his compound. He will then take a fowl to the *kpasodan*[1]
241 (the tenant of that land) who will give the offering to his ancestor.
427 This tenant had originally approached the *Ten'dan'* before acquiring the land, and the sub-tenant, therefore, apparently need not again do so. A *Ten'dan'*, on giving land to any one for the first time, will ask for fowls (not white ones), one for his father, one for the land. 'After sacrificing, I will conduct the man to the land, take a hoe, break the ground, and tell the man that he may begin cultivating. I show him the boundaries of his farm. I need not tell him that anything he finds on the land is mine; he knows that already. He knows, too, that if he ever refuses to allow any one to pass over his land, or if he is greedy about his crops, not giving some to those who are hungry, I have the power to drive him from the land.'

'The *Ten'dan'* makes the land good.' 'The *Ten'dan'* owns (or rather
793 owned, for in many places I found this ancient prerogative usurped
425 by the Chiefs) all lost cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, fowls, iron, hoes, axes, and brass ornaments. A *Ten'dan'* is never succeeded by his brother
[292] or by his son. This hat [referring to the distinctive string hat worn by *Ten'dan'*] is not a rich thing. Any one in a section may become *Ten'dan'*.'

Again: 'When the Mampruse, under *Misore*, first came here, they captured a man near a well who said he was the *Ten'dan'* of Gbeo. Later on *Misore* found other *Ten'dam'* at Bare, Ka, and Kundugu. He did not kill them, but appointed them to sacrifice to the land and show him her *kyibir* (avoidances, Nankane *kyisiri*), and rights—avoidance of blood, right of *Ten'dan'* to lost property or anything found on the

[1] Nankane, *Kusedana*.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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land. The *Ten'dan'* of Bade also told *Misore* about the festival of the 'bad water-moon.'[1]

The Territorial Ruler: The position of the territorial rulers among the Talense appears to be so similar to that already described when discussing the neighbouring tribe, the Nankanse, as to leave little or nothing to add to what has been recorded. The Talense Chiefs go to Kurugu for their 'red fez.' When a vacancy occurs, there is a scramble among those eligible to fill the vacancy, one vying with another for the post, which, as likely as not, falls to the highest bidder. This method of selection would appear to have very little to recommend it, save that it appears to have been in vogue before our advent in these parts. No doubt it does not 'pay' the Chief, in whose hands the selection lies, to appoint a man who is wholly unacceptable to the people, and the 'presents' tendered on these occasions seem to have been a recognized and not unimportant portion of the revenues accruing to a head Chief. The custom becomes, perhaps, more subject to abuse when we find it practised in turn by the lesser Chiefs in the appointment of the *kambon na*, who, as I have already stated, often seem to usurp the positions which should by right be held by the section-leaders.

In an old 'District Record Book,' at Zuargu, under a date of nearly twenty years ago, I found a note, of which the following is an extract. It refers, I think, more especially to those Chiefs whom I have named 'Government-made-Chiefs': 'The people look with suspicion on any one who prospers and becomes the owner of property, or on any of their so-called 'Chiefs,' who, backed up by us, "put on airs," and try to assume control over the people. The Chiefs have no prestige, no historical names to quote as their predecessors.' This is as true to-day as it was twenty years ago.

The position of the head of a family and of other members of his household among the Talense does not exhibit any features with which we are not already familiar. The following is an additional note on pawns.

Talem (pawns): A man may want to get money to become a Chief and pawn (verb, *nwe taleme*) his son. If he is head of a house, he need not ask any one's permission; if not, he will consult his father or elder brother. 'A pawn's head is not shaved as is a slave's.' A boy is pawned for from one to four cows. The debtor is *sandan*, the creditor *bondam*. If the *talem* dies, the *sandan* still has to pay. Famine might cause a man to pawn or sell his son. 'If you sell any one, you give the *Ten'dan'* a goat or a fowl because the land does not agree to that (*tey npu sayera.*)'

[1] See Chapter XXVI.

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611 602 groups. Cognates have mutual bonds of sentiment and reciprocal obligations, but not necessarily common interests. All the members of a given lineage have the same agnatic kin and, therefore identical lineage ties; but only identical siblings—that is, brothers or sisters by the same parents—have the same cognatic kin.[1] By automatically making him a member of maximal lineage and clan, his agnatic descent fits the individual into the constituted framework of Tale society. It is this that gives him his political status in the society. It gives him also a special field of defined social relations with clear contours. Cognatic kinship creates a number of contingent social ties for the individual, valid for him only. Unlike lineage ties, they differ in quality; they multiply in the course of his lifetime; in theory their range is indeterminate, since there is no limit to the reckoning of cognatic kinship. Tallensi often discover cognates of whom they were previously ignorant, in the most unexpected places in their own country, even in their own clan. But it is extremely rare for anyone to discover a hitherto unknown agnate, even in these days of relatively great mobility.

602 The Tallensi maintain, and genealogies of individuals bear this out, that if enough were known of the genealogical relationships of the people of adjacent settlements, they would all be found to be related to one another. In the clan itself, under the surface of its strict patrilineal organization, the filaments of cognatic kinship bind individuals together by special personal bonds which operate independently of lineage ties. This complex and unlimited ramification of cognatic kinship gives these relations great fluidity, in contrast to the comparative fixity of lineage relations. Individuals are often connected by multiple cognatic ties which are differentially effective in different situations; and, as will be clearer later, cognatic ties make breaches in the barriers of lineage and clan exclusiveness, thus extending widely the flow of social relations.

593 602 The domestic family is the matrix of all the genealogical ties of the individual, the contemporary mechanism for ever spinning new threads of kinship, and the focal field of social relations based on consanguinity. In it we can observe the working of the nuclear patterns of kinship and the formation of the ideas and values which steer the individual in all his genealogical relationships. In the domestic family we get the sharpest picture of the interaction between cognatic kinship and agnatic or lineage ties. We have there the elementary ties of cognatic kinship linking parent to child and sibling to sibling, and we have also the agnatic tie which

[1] These are the kinsfolk whom Rivers called a man's *kindred*; vide *Kinship and Social Organization*, p. 80. I am avoiding this term as it is best used to refer to a defined social unit in Rivers's sense. Sibship among the Teutons and Celts was reckoned bilaterally on this principle, cf. Vinogradoff, P., *Outlines of Historical Jurisprudence*, vol. i, ch. viii. But the kindred as a defined social unit does not exist among the Tallensi.

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sets apart the males as the nucleus of the lineage. We can see the centrifugal, sundering force of matrilateral kinship counterbalancing the centripetal, uniting pull of patriliny. In the context of family life we can see the play of conflict and compromise in the working out of the primary equilibrium of Tale social organization, due to the interaction of these two sectors of social life.

Through his primary relations of consanguinity in the domestic family the individual is linked to agnates in other families and to cognates in other families and clans. There is, however, one significant difference between intra-familial and extra-familial bonds of kinship. Unlike the latter, the former are necessarily ambivalent, each relationship containing within itself both an agnatic and a cognatic component. In a joint family of three generations, for example, a child's relationship with his father differs from his relationship with his grandfather or his mother. Though these are all cognatic relationships, the tension and latent rivalry in the relationship of father and son stand in marked contrast to the comradeship of grandfather and grandson. On the other hand, grandfather, father, and son belong to the same lineage segment; they are united by a common interest in patrimonial land and in the product of their joint labour, by a common ancestor cult, by rights and duties vested in that lineage in relation to like segments of a greater lineage, and by their common concern for the continuity of their line. These are part of the whole complex of common interests and values that mobilize corporate action and maintain corporate solidarity in the maximal lineage and clan of which they form a segment. The men of a joint family may be thrown into conflict with one another on account of their cognatic relationships, but they act in union and on behalf of one another and of the whole unit in virtue of their lineage ties.

There is another paradox in the structure of the Tale family that is of importance for our inquiry. Consanguineous relationships arise out of parenthood; but parenthood presupposes marriage, a union of a man and a woman who are, by definition, not kin. The bonds of kinship are rooted in a bond the very essence of which is the absence of kinship. Hence comes the ambivalence inherent in intra-familial cognatic relations. Hence comes, also, another category of social relations, both in the family and between members of different families and clans, relations of affinity. There are two axes, as it were, in the structure of the family, the axis of kinship and that of marriage.

Before we discuss kinship in the domestic family more fully, we must consider a few matters of more general import. For the constellation of ties and cleavages that makes up the focal field of kinship is conditioned by the formative principles and values that shape the greater society into which the domestic family fits and which it helps to knit together. All person-to-person relations in the family are biased by the values attached to patrilineal descent and maternal origin in the total social structure.

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strictly differentiated from a son in jural terms. The kinship tie between sister's son and mother's brother is an important breach in the genealogical fence enclosing the agnatic lineage; it is one of the main gateways of an individual's social relations with members of other clans than his own.

But the recognition accorded to the mother's agnatic kin does not bring out the deeper implications of maternal origin as the complementary of paternal origin. These implications are contained in the concept *soog* (pl. *saarət* or *soorət*). This concept involves the idea of matrilineal descent in contrast to that of patrilineal descent. Both in its range of efficacy, its mode of operation, its jural and ritual value, and its emotional and sentimental connotation, matrilineal descent stands in contrast to patriliny.

For obvious physiological reasons the bond of consanguinity with one's mother is unique and unalterable, and it is a peculiarly personal bond. The fact that one's jural status is not derived from one's mother serves to emphasize the personal nature of this bond. A person's mother may desert his father and leave him to be reared (*ugh*) by another woman; he may feel some resentment over this all his life; but she remains his true mother, 'the mother who bore him (*ma dɔyarug*)'. Nothing can alter this fact or extinguish the kinship ties that arise from it.

We postpone for a later chapter a consideration of the emotional ties of mother and child. The concept *soog* has definite emotional implications; but here we are concerned with its implications for the social structure. *Soog* means a bond of consanguinity which excludes completely any reckoning with lineage affiliation. People who are *saarət* define themselves biologically as 'the offspring of one womb'—or, in the actual phraseology of the natives, 'to have come from one vagina (*yi pεn yεni*)'. This is the common way of stating it; occasionally, but far less commonly, one hears people defining themselves as patrilineally related by the corresponding phrase 'to be the children of one penis (*woor yεni biis*)'.

Saarət, therefore, are uterine kin. Between mother and child there is a uterine bond corresponding to the agnatic bond between father and child; and children of one woman are *saarət*, irrespective of their paternity. A woman may have children by different men of the same clan or of different clans; they are *saarət*, irrespective of their clan affiliations.

Soog is more than the bond of personal kinship between mother and child, and between siblings by the same mother. It is the bond of uterine descent perpetuated through the female line in the same way as the bond of agnatic descent is transmitted through the male line. Uterine siblings are *saarət*; uterine sisters' children are *saarət* (but not uterine brothers' children, for the children of men are not their father's *saarət*); uterine female cousins' children are *saarət*; and so on,

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PLATE 2

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a. The domestic family is the matrix of kinship. A family party out lifting ground-nuts on the home farm. Their homestead is in the background. From right to left: the head of the family, his infant daughter, his adult son, the latter's wife and baby, the family head's wife and daughter

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b. A domestic sacrifice: cleaning and apportioning the meat of the goat at the conclusion of the sacrifice. Banan-Teroog, his senior wife, and his junior wife's two children. The old woman is holding a chicken ready for the next sacrifice

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dies of small-pox—and that the decision was not accepted as conclusive by her *saarət* whom it directly implicated. A proven witch's uterine kin, her children in particular, felt the shame for a time, but they were not publicly stigmatized or penalized. Even the husband of an apparently guilty woman would, judging by what happens nowadays, very often continue privately to believe in her innocence; and if he admitted her guilt would not allow this to influence his relations with his children by her.

The public attitude to a witch nowadays is illustrated by the following case which occurred during my stay among the Tallensi. A young man from Yinduuri went to visit a kinsman at Moyaduur. Arriving at his kinsman's house, he was offered some cold porridge by an old woman of the house who happened to be the only person at home. Now, cold porridge is not a dish to offer to a guest. The poorest native would blush with shame if he had nothing better to put before a visitor. But in this instance the young man was weary and hungry after a long tramp. His kinsman was not at home to offer him more seemly hospitality and the old woman had nothing else. So he accepted it gladly.

Later in the day, on his way home, the youth was suddenly taken ill with what soon proved to be acute dysentery. He at once thought of the old woman's cold porridge and told his family of this when he reached home. Next day he died. Thereupon his father accused the old woman of having bewitched the youth through the medium of the cold porridge, and so caused his death. Her unconventional hospitality and the sequence of events seemed to leave no doubt about her guilt. There was, it is true, no obvious motive, but this was not taken into consideration. Indeed, as one man remarked, the youth was himself partly to blame, for no self-respecting adult would eat cold porridge at someone else's house. However, the old woman was sent for and the matter submitted to divination. As the dead youth's clansmen had no doubt about her guilt, it is not to be wondered at that the diviner declared her to have bewitched him. In vain she protested her innocence. The head of the youth's maximal lineage told all his people to mock (*wool*) her with a derisive chant. Neighbouring clans took up the chant, as she passed on her way home, and some weeks later it was made the theme of one of the dance songs of the Golib Festival. 'Wherever she goes', my informants said, 'men, women, and children will look askance at her and jeer at her for being a witch. Shame and grief will dog her, and she will pine away and die.' It was for fear of this kind of public ostracism that anyone accused of being a witch in the old days insisted on undergoing the arrow ordeal.

The main reason why witchcraft is of minor significance in Tale mystical thought is because the elaborate ancestor cult and the Earth cult deal adequately with most social and psychological tensions in terms consistent with the total social structure. The idea of witchcraft is not

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592 361 no foundation in fact. The climate, the kind of raw material which is plentifully at hand, the economic system, and the social organization of the natives rather than the alleged lawlessness of former times, determine their mode of house-building. In any case, homesteads very often stand closer than fifty paces together, the distance at which a mediocre shot can hit a tree—though I have seen an arrow carry four times that distance.

592 181 A Talɔŋ's home is his castle in the psychological rather than the material sense. It is the centre and fount of his major interests, his dominant purposes, his deepest emotional attachments, and his whole scheme of values; it is his shelter, his storehouse, the stage of his life's drama. The Tallensi, unlike many African peoples, have no age sets or initiation schools. A person grows up and receives his entire education at home. If he practises a craft, such as leatherwork, or is a diviner, his home is his workshop or consulting place.

As an adult, all his economic enterprise issues from his home and is devoted primarily to its upkeep. Unless he is one of the few *nouveaux riches* of to-day he keeps all his material possessions there, and houses all his livestock within its walls. His sex life, in maturity, is centred there. His children, the supreme object of his aspirations, are born and grow up in his home under his care and control. He worships his immediate forbears there. His personal destiny, past, present, and future, revolves about his home, its stages perpetuated in the many shrines and other ritual objects that are housed in it. He receives his friends and relatives at home, and dispenses hospitality there; and if he [461] has nothing to do would as lief recline under the shade tree at his own gateway as go making calls on others. Even the young men who like gallivanting about the markets spend much of their leisure at home.

592 181 626 The quintessence of his home, to a Talɔŋ, resides in his children, and above all his sons, the vehicles of his immortality. That is the essential meaning of *mar yiri*, 'to have a house'. Ask any native what happens to a man who does not adequately expiate a sacrilege such as murder. '*U yiri ymaarɔme*—his house will fall to pieces,' is the answer, given with emphatic and solemn conviction, and often with circumstantial illustrations from experience or hearsay. A parent curses an insubordinate child, a chief or tendaana curses a clansman who has grossly insulted him, '*u ku nye yiri*—he will not see (i.e. have) a house', that is, he will die without offspring to perpetuate his line and to sacrifice to his spirit; and this is an extremely serious matter. It never fails to bring the culprit to heel with humble apologies. On the other hand, '*i na nye yiri*—you will have a house', is the most propitious blessing a diviner can convey to a man from his ancestor spirits.

592 593 Patrilocal residence and the tendency for the lineage to be localized give a man's domestic life greater continuity than a woman's. His natal family and his conjugal family are both strung on the same

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lineage. The latter grows directly out of the former and very often occupies the same dwelling as, or one close to that of, the former. For a woman marriage signifies a sharp break. As wife and mother she generally lives in a different, even if familiarly close, clan settlement from that of her birth. A man, living all his life side by side with the other members of his lineage, participating in the hierarchy of the corporate units that make up the lineage system, identifying himself with all its members through their common jural, economic, and ceremonial interests, makes an easy, self-evident, and gradual transition from the status of a minor (*tarəm*) under his father's control to that of a father and head of a household. The change in status and social role from that of a daughter and member of one lineage to that of a wife and mother in the settlement of another is more drastic and complex. A woman has no rights in or ties with the community[1] in which she spends the greatest part of her life, exercises her heaviest responsibilities, achieves her most cherished fulfilment, and acquires her strongest emotional attachments, except through her family by marriage, her husband, and her children. Thus a woman's life is fraught with many possibilities of conflict between the loyalties and sentiments towards her natal lineage and those which she gradually builds up in relation to her husband's lineage.

The effect of all this is to make the home of even greater importance for a woman than for a man. Her conjugal home is the supreme and almost the sole domain of her labour and life. Her children are the very hub of her existence. She is first and foremost a housewife and mother, toiling devotedly in the care of her children, in attending to her husband's needs, in giving her contribution of labour and skill to the economy of the household, and in the numerous household tasks that call for daily attention.

The Architecture of the Homestead in Relation to the Structure of the Domestic Family

Tale homesteads are solidly constructed of pile (puddled mud, *tan*), and they are built to last. Erecting the circular walls tier by tier, plastering them, roofing the rooms, stamping the floors, adding the small contrivances and the decorations that increase the comfort and attraction of the homestead, are all tasks requiring considerable skill, care, and co-operation. They are not the work of specialists, though some men and women have more skill in them than others, and many people have such poor skill that they never undertake them. The conventional division of labour involves both sexes equally in the building of a homestead. Building and thatching is men's work; plastering, drawing the crude lines and geometrical designs that

[1] She may, and usually does, have cognatic kinsfolk there, but her ties with them are valid only for the particular individuals.

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If the head of the house is still junior in status in the lineage hierarchy, as Ɔndieso is, it will be the shrine dedicated to his father's Destiny (*yin*), or it may be his father's divining (*bakologo*) shrine. The house is still under the spiritual jurisdiction of Ɔndieso's dead father, though he himself now owns it in the temporal sense. A man of greater social maturity, with grown children and higher lineage status, would very likely have his own *yin* or *bakologo* shrine at his gateway. His house is established; it is no longer the fulfilment of his father's destiny, as is the house of a young man, though it may still be known by his father's or grandfather's name. For as long as a homestead remains standing it is known by the name of the man who first built it.

A bird's-eye view would show a homestead as covering a roughly circular or oval area (Figs. 2*a* and 2*b*). The space in front of the gateway (*zanɔne*—at the gateway) belongs pre-eminently to the menfolk. The public phases of funeral and mortuary ceremonies, which are corporate concerns of the lineage and are conducted by the men, take place there. When anything touching the rights, duties, or interests of the head of the family in his capacity as a member of a particular lineage calls for consultation with fellow members of the lineage, the *zanɔne* is the gathering place. It is the proper place for him to receive greetings, condolences, or congratulations, and to conduct formal negotiations in a matter such as the payment of bride-price owed to him or by him. In the dry season he often rests there, beneath the shade tree, during the sweltering afternoon, chatting with a friend or fondling an infant left in his charge while its mother is busy indoors. Women of the house come and go freely, and often sit or lounge about in front of the gateway; but when 'an affair of the men (*buraas yɛl*)' is in progress they keep away.

The gateway (*zanɔr*) always faces west to south-west, 'where the sun sets (*nintaŋ nhaat*)'. This is a convention never broken by the Tallensi, though they have neither a naturalistic explanation nor a mystical rationalization for it, and it is not subject to mystical sanctions.[1]

The gateway is a V-shaped opening, about a foot wide at the base and 3 to 4 feet wide on top, between two round pillars (*meelɔŋ*) forming part of the wall of the house. Large irregularly spaced holes are made in these pillars for short logs to be inserted at night as cross-bars against which a heavy, hollow board (*bɛluŋ*), cut from a tree-trunk, or a bundle of poles can be leaned to close the gateway. Tallensi say that they build the gateway thus in order to bar it the more securely against the

[1] As the rain-bearing winds blow from the south-east, and the tornadoes that begin and end the rainy season come from an easterly direction, it is possible that the placing of the doorway on the western side of the house is an adaptation to this feature of the climate. Anyone who has experienced the discomfort of a tornado whirling straight into a room, or of a heavy rain, in this region will appreciate the usefulness of placing the only entrance into a homestead on the lee side. But no native has ever given me this obvious explanation, though this may be due to inadequate inquiries on my part.

[Text is continued on p. 54.—Ed.]

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343 181 are the emblems of his individuality. They participate in it, for they are imbued with his body 'dirt (*daɣət*)'—a concept which has a physiological facet, meaning the exuviae adhering to a man's garments, quiver, or other objects constantly handled by him, and a mystical facet implying the quintessence of his individuality. The Talis also acknowledge this complex association between a man and his granary and other intimate possessions, expressing it in analogous customs, in the routine of family life and in their ideals of family relations.

351 To enter the living-quarters of a homestead one climbs over the low dividing wall (*ɣɛbəg*) at the back of the *sapak* by means of a step (*bimbimər*) and descends, by a similar step on the other side, into an irregular courtyard (*dɛndɔŋo*, pl. *dɛndɔna*) of beaten gravel, which is surrounded by a number of rooms. According to the wealth, rank, or status of the *ɣirdaana* this *dɛndɔŋo* varies in size from about 20 to about 6 square yards.

592 593 342 351 This *dɛndɔŋo* belongs to the principal woman (*dugdaana*) of the house. The *dɛndɔna* of junior wives are smaller. In Ɔndieso's house the senior woman is his mother's surviving co-wife, whom he calls his 'younger mother' (*mapit*, lit. 'mother's younger sister'), and who has remained with him since the death of his father. Her rooms occupy roughly the left half of the homestead, facing inwards from the *sapak*. From this *dɛndɔŋo*, turning right between a small room beside the granary and a larger room straight ahead, one enters a similar *dɛndɔŋo* in the middle of another set of rooms, those of Ɔndieso's wife. These take up roughly the right half of the homestead, facing inwards. The *ɣirdaana*'s mother's (own mother, or proxy-mother) rooms always occupy the position of honour in the centre of the arc; his senior wife's (*poɣakpeem*) rooms lie on the right-hand side of these; his second wife's, or his younger brother's senior wife's rooms lie on the left, looking inwards. The rooms of the other wives of the head of the family or of his brothers are distributed as convenience dictates. For example, wives who are clan sisters will usually have adjoining quarters; wives who get on badly will be put in well-separated rooms. If none of a man's father's widows is living with him, and he has more than one wife, his senior wife occupies the central group of rooms, his second wife those on her right, and so forth. Generally the women's apartments all communicate with one another. But if a woman has a quarrelsome disposition or gets on badly with her co-wives for any other reason, her quarters will be separated from those of the next-door wife by a low party wall, to prevent undue trespassing by her co-wives or their children.

342 593 A woman's apartments make up a self-contained section in the homestead. This is her *dug* (pl. *dugət*). Basically *dug* means a single room, but it is extended to mean the single set of rooms belonging to one wife. In the Tale family every woman with children is entitled to her own *dug*. Women guard this right jealously, and if a man has not built separate quarters for his wife by the time that she has had her first child,

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she will become very discontented. A young wife sometimes runs off to her father's home because she thinks she ought to have her own *dug* and her husband has been dilatory about it; and she will refuse to return until he convinces her of his intention to build her *dug* immediately. The observance of this rule is an essential element in the structure of the domestic family. It is indispensable for the satisfactory working of the domestic economy and for the mutual adjustment of person to person. A wife's separate quarters stand for her relative autonomy as wife, mother and housekeeper, *vis-à-vis* the other women of the family.

As the head of the house is *yirdaana*, master of the house, so the senior woman of the house—his mother, or senior wife—is the *dugdaana*, the mistress of the rooms. Every woman is the *dugdaana* of her own apartments, but the mistress of the principal *dug* is the *dugdaana* of the whole house.

In a polygynous family, or what might be called a multicellular family, the senior *dugdaana* has more authority in domestic affairs, and more esteem in the eyes of the public than the other women of the household have. Whether she is the *yirdaana*'s mother or his senior wife, she is the central pillar of his domestic establishment, honorifically more than actively in the case of the former, actively as well as honorifically in the case of the latter.

One sign of this is that most of the ancestor and medicine shrines that are kept indoors rest in the *dɛndɔŋo* and rooms of the senior woman. They include a man's personal shrines, as well as those of which he is custodian as head of a lineage segment. Sacrifice is offered to these shrines in this *dɛndɔŋo*, the women and children of the family often taking part. A man's ancestors keep watch and ward both indoors and out over the things, the place, and the people most precious to him.

When a person dies he or she must not only be gathered to the ancestors, but must subsequently be ritually brought back, as a spirit, into the living quarters, the veritable home. The expression '*Kpeehu la dugni*—bring him [her] into the *dug*', used for this as well as the customary rites, make this clear.

The intimate domestic life of a family goes on mainly in the *dɛndɔŋo*. Meals are often cooked and always eaten there. Food is never cooked outside the homestead except for ritual or ceremonial purposes. A woman does much of her domestic work in her *dɛndɔŋo*. Her babies learn to crawl and to take their first steps there. She entertains guests and relatives, and receives her daughter's suitors there. When the crops are harvested they are spread out to dry in the *dɛndɔŋo* before being stored. A man often sits about in his wife's *dɛndɔŋo* when he has a leisurely manual task in hand. Youths and girls come to dance there when an elderly person's funeral is celebrated. And on pleasant nights, after a satisfying meal, men, women, and children sit there conversing or gossiping or asking riddles.

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CHAPTER IV

HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE FAMILY

The General and the Particular in the Pattern of Domestic Relations

611 IT is clear from Chapter II that *dɔŋam*, the fact of birth, the event that fixes one's descent immutably, takes precedence over all other conditions governing the social relations and the social roles of a Talɔŋ. This principle comes out in all departments of Tale social life, and nowhere so plainly as in the organization of domestic life. We turn, therefore, to examine the working of kinship in the domestic family, which we have called the focal field of kinship.

593 It is important to bear in mind that kinship relations in the family group are inter-articulated in a single configuration, dominated by the *patria potestas* of the male head of the family. The relations of father and child are coloured by the relations of mother and child that coexist with them, and the relations of mother and child acquire a special accent in the context of the relations between co-wives. Particular domestic relationships appear in their true light only when they are considered as part of the total pattern. The polarity of *dug* and *yir* moulds them all; all play a part in the balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces in the structure of the family. All, moreover, are subject to the pull and pressure of genealogical connexions and groupings outside the family circle.

593 606 The natives are very conscious of this, and take it into account in the management of their lives. They say, for instance, that a woman's parents continue to have great influence over her for some years after her marriage and that is why her husband must keep on the good side of his parents-in-law. 'Don't you know what in-lawship means?' said Bayankura, somewhat lugubriously, when I found him hard at work helping to rebuild his father-in-law's homestead. Again, Tiezien's family believed that he was much under the influence of his senior wife, Tanzoo. So when by various pretexts he caused both of his late brother's sons to lose the young wives they had recently taken, they ascribed it morosely to Tanzoo's jealousy of their mother, Tiezien's second wife.

181 We shall not attempt a full-dress study of Tale family life; here we are concerned only with the structurally significant norms. In a society as homogeneous and economically undifferentiated as that of the Tallensi, people of the same sex, age, and social standing tend to have the same life history; and organized units such as the lineage and the family tend to have a stereotyped structure and development. The common denominators of action stand out.

858 156 Yet it is a constantly reiterated assumption of the natives that no two

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Within the joint family, though its members maintain a very intimate association with one another, make free of one anothers' possessions, and go freely in and out of every woman's quarters, each woman and her children are ensured a certain amount of privacy in their own *dug*. Husband and wife form a precisely distinguished unit. They have complete privacy in their sexual relations and a great deal of privacy in other relations. It would be the grossest breach of manners for anyone but their own infant child to intrude on a man and his wife in their own sleeping-room.

In their own home, therefore, a family has much privacy. A man can confide in his wife or his son things that he does not want others to know about—things about his debts, his property, or his ritual possessions. He can talk over with them problems concerning the household or matters of public import. There are ritual activities, such as sacrifices to a medicine shrine, in which only a man and his sons or the members of the joint family share. Sometimes such domestic secrets have to be divulged, especially after a man's death. It may be necessary to clear up a question of a debt he owed or to carry out special rites for one of his medicine shrines. But until then they are usually faithfully guarded. The Talaŋa can keep his own counsel if need be.

The Significance of Marriage[1]

As the preceding chapters suggest, Tale domestic relations do not remain perpetually fixed. They change and develop with the years. At one time the ties of economic co-operation, of reciprocal sentiment and mutual loyalties, of reciprocal and shared rights and duties, are uppermost; at another the underlying cleavages and competing interests push through. This appears very clearly in the relations of husband and wife, the central pillar of the domestic organization. We shall discuss the marital relationship in some detail, for it is a nodal relationship in Tale social life. It is not only the starting-point of the family, but the starting-point of the kinship ties that run across and between genealogically independent clans and lineages. Through marriage the mutually exclusive corporate units of Tale society become interlaced with one another.

The Tallensi regard marriage as the normal state of life for every adult. They cannot conceive of anyone voluntarily refraining from marriage throughout life. There is something wrong, by native standards, with men and women who never marry; and they are few. In the whole of Tongo I knew only five men who had never been married and who would, according to common belief, never marry. One was obviously mentally defective; another was an invert; two were said to be so ugly that no woman would accept them, but both were also definitely unbalanced and eccentric; and the last was a gentle old man, who, it was

[1] A preliminary account of Tale marriage customs is given in my pamphlet, *Marriage Law among the Tallensi*, Government Press, Gold Coast, 1935.

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581 583 [586] the bridegroom's guardian must send the placation gift (*lu sendaan*) to the bride's guardian, and must pay a proportion of the bride-price acceptable to the latter. A wife is usually espoused (*sol*) by paying the bride-price of four head of cattle or their equivalent in instalments over a number of years. If he does not fulfil these jural requirements, a man has no rights to and over his wife. On the other hand, women frequently desert husbands who have paid a part or, occasionally, even the whole bride-price. In such a case an honourable man may feel bound to compel his daughter to return to her husband, but if the girl refuses obstinately he may have to yield to her. Often, however, a father prefers his daughter to find another husband from whom he claims the bride-price that has to be refunded to the first husband. And it is not uncommon for men to instigate a daughter to leave her lawful husband for another man, or to take a daughter away from her husband and give her to another man as a means of raising what we should call ready cash or its equivalent—for instance, a cow to repay a pressing debt, or to buy grain for the household. Thus, observance of the jural proprieties gives a husband a weapon with which he can try to assert his rights to and over his wife. It does not give him an absolute guarantee of these rights nor does it ensure the stability of the marriage.

582 593 A girl's parents, and especially her father, can make or mar a marriage. Young people may wed without their fathers' consent, but they cannot remain legitimately married without it. If a man objects to a son-in-law he usually succeeds in exercising his right to take his daughter away, though cases are numerous in which the woman has persistently returned to the rejected husband, who has had to be accepted in the end. By contrast, if a father has himself chosen or likes his daughter's husband, he is a strong ally. He can force the girl, beating her if necessary, to stay with her husband, though here again fathers have been known to fail with obdurate daughters. Generally, however, the strength of [789] paternal authority makes a father's command irresistible; for he might curse an intractable daughter, and this is greatly dreaded.

583 691 Again, a woman will not stay with a husband who does not pay at least a portion of the bride-price. It is an insult to her, placing her on the level of a casual lover and exposing her to the taunts of her co-wives of the lineage. Pukiehət's wife was taken from him five times because he could not pay anything towards her bride-price; every time she came back. At length her guardian brought a case against Pukiehət. The chief put it to her that Pukiehət was, in effect, treating both her and her guardian with contempt. Sadly she admitted this and agreed to leave him if he did not meet the debt at once. Pukiehət saw he was in danger of losing his wife. He was a poor man; but he set to work energetically and managed to raise the equivalent of two cows, which was enough to satisfy his father-in-law.

586 Even a fruitful marriage, the strongest of all bonds between husband

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and wife, may suffer shipwreck. Many women leave a husband or are taken from him after bearing one child to him. Only after a woman has borne two or three living children to a man does this bond become a really effective force in maintaining the marriage.

The real foundation of a lasting marriage is not custom or jural or ritual sanctions, but a satisfactory relationship between the married pair; and this is a complex tissue woven of many strands, changing and strengthening with the years. It has elements that can be translated into terms of reciprocal rights, duties, and services. But it is essentially a moral and personal bond, a question of the mutual adjustment of roles and persons in pursuit of the interests married partners have in one another and in common, and the purposes they share. The sexual bond is of vital importance in this relationship.

The personality of a spouse is important. A lazy man who neglects to provide for his wife sufficiently, a harsh man who strikes her at the least provocation, a man who through sickness, impotence, or lack of consideration does not or will not give her sexual satisfaction, yet holds her jealously to her marital fidelity; any such man may find it hard to keep a wife. A lazy woman, a disobedient woman, a woman with a hasty temper or one who is a confirmed gadabout, is likely to have several husbands before she finally settles down. A barren woman, too, with her growing sense of frustration as the years pass, tends to become restless and to drift from husband to husband. Such a one is Gelima, Naabdiya's elderly sister, who has tried no fewer than eighteen husbands and has been compelled to seek a haven for her declining years in her brother's home. Barrenness is one of the reasons for which a man may decide to get rid of a wife, but often enough a barren wife who is a good worker and has a tractable disposition gains her husband's devotion and remains with him. Occasionally a wife proves to be a petty thief, who filches the supplies of other women of the household or stores put aside by the men. She will get short shrift, and will be sent back in disgrace, formally, by the head of her husband's *dug*; for such a person is bound to cause endless disturbance in the family. A woman accused of witchcraft by a co-wife may be dealt with similarly, it is said, but in the few cases I have heard of the husbands have not divorced the women. Lastly, no man will tolerate a wife who suffers from nocturnal enuresis, however attractive or proficient she may be. To urinate on the sleeping-mat during sleep is a grave mystical offence endangering the life of the husband; hence, a woman suffering from this complaint is formally sent back to her parents.

The Wife's Ties with Her Paternal Family and Lineage

These accidents of personality affect only a minority of marriages. The constant social factors that steer the course of every marriage are of greater significance to us, and must be examined more fully. When

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602 a woman marries she does not forfeit her status as a daughter of her
●593 natal lineage (*pɔŋayabəlɔg*) or lose her personal ties with her parents and siblings. We have discussed this, in its broader aspects, in our previous volume[1] and confine ourselves here to family ties. Throughout her life she keeps in close touch with her parents and siblings and other members of her clan, especially her close agnates. If, as is common, other daughters of her clan have married into her husband's clan, these will be the classificatory co-wives with whom she has most contact and to whom she gives and from whom she receives most help, kindness, and support. She visits her natal settlement, as well as her sisters married elsewhere, regularly, and is often visited by members of her parental family. She not only has emotional bonds with her natal family that time never erases, but she also retains certain privileges, which have almost the force of rights, in it and in her natal clan, as we have shown in our previous volume. Her natal family and clan also have claims on her all her life. This is strongly marked in the first two or three years of marriage, before motherhood, habit, and an increasing share in its routine have knit her firmly into her conjugal family.

574 In the early years of marriage a woman seldom lets an opportunity
593 of visiting her natal family go by. She calls in to see how they are on her way to or from market. Now and then she comes to stay a few days. If she is ill she will generally come to stay with her mother, who will tend her much more carefully than her co-wives or in-laws. When Tɔŋ-Yikpɛmdaan's daughter developed an asthmatic complaint she stayed with her parents for nearly a year. When Da'amo'o's wife went down with guinea-worm she took her three-months-old baby and went to her father's house until she was cured, though it is considered a risky thing to take so young an infant out of its father's house. At sowing or harvest time a man often sends for a young married daughter who has no child to come and help. At all times a married daughter is informed, and sometimes sent for, if there is serious sickness in her parental home. She must be sent for if a member of her parental family dies; and she will go even if it means leaving a tiny infant in the care of a co-wife for a day or two.

761 On this matter Tallensi are extremely sensitive, for death is the great
602 test of all social ties among them. All relatives of the dead, and especially the principal mourners—parents, spouses, children, siblings—have defined ritual observances, ritual duties, and practical tasks in mortuary and funeral ceremonies. A death often comes as a shock to these close relatives, and especially the death of a parent or sibling to a married daughter of the family. Her mother-in-law or husband will break the news gently to her with a tactful periphrasis. But she must be told and sent for, else she—and, backing her up, her conjugal family—would be deeply offended. On her part, not to go when thus summoned would

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. ix.

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be a grievous sin against her parents and her ancestors, sure to bring misfortune on her and her children.

I was the unsuspecting witness of the strength of a woman's filial devotion, brought out by the crisis of death, at Sawɔŋba's burial ceremony. Sawɔŋba's daughter married a Tɛnzugu man against her father's wish. To add insult to injury, when Sawɔŋba sent messengers to demand a cow of the bride-price, his son-in-law turned them away with contempt. As the girl refused to leave her husband, Sawɔŋba cursed her, and, being a leper who knew he had not long to live, expressly forbade her to come to his funeral. She was not told of his death, but heard of it indirectly. On the day of the burial, during one of the major rites, there was a sudden commotion in the crowd around the gateway. A young woman dashed forward, making for the homestead. I could see the strained and agitated look on her face as she passed me. But at once one of Sawɔŋba's classificatory sons darted forward, seized her, and dragged her back to the tree where the elders sat. For a minute or two nothing but a wildly shouting mob could be seen under the tree. Then the girl struggled out, sobbing aloud, her body covered with bruises where she had been beaten by her enraged brothers and clansmen. Followed by execrations, she was escorted by one of the elders to where her husband and a party of his lineage kin were waiting. Only the fear of bloodshed, which would make the affair into that much-dreaded thing, a 'case for the white man (*nasaara yɛl*)', had restrained them from interfering. Sawɔŋba's sons and lineage kin did not see the pathos of their sister's action. They were thoroughly incensed, and called it an insult. Had her husband wished to behave properly, he would have sent an elder of his lineage to beg Sawɔŋba's pardon while he was still alive, or, at any rate, to beg the head of Sawɔŋba's medial lineage to intercede with his sons when he heard of Sawɔŋba's death.

These bonds of a woman with her parental family play an important part in Tale domestic economy. After the harvest there is always a great coming and going of daughters to and from their parental homes. And no man would let his daughter or sister depart, at this time, without a gift of a well-filled basket of grain. This is one way in which a woman builds up her own private resources out of which she provides little luxuries, utensils, and clothes for herself and by means of which she often tides the family over a lean period. This is a privilege, but it has almost the force of a right. Occasionally an elderly woman without a son, or, as sometimes happens nowadays, with her only son away for long in Ashanti or the Colony, is left without proper support in her husband's home. She can then go back to her father's home and is entitled to her sustenance as of right. The services a woman's husband renders to her father, now and then, in the early years of marriage, the interest she has in her brother's children, the importance attached to

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kinship ties with the mother's brother and his lineage, are all evidence of the imperishability of a woman's ties with her parental family.

Last but not least, a woman continues all her life to be under the care of her patrilineal ancestors. She must observe their totemic taboos. One of them is her spirit guardian (*sɣɔr*), to whom her husband will have to send animals on her behalf as sacrifices on critical occasions such as her first confinement, and from whose tutelage she must be ritually released on death. Whenever an important sacrifice to these ancestors takes place in her paternal home she is told, and has the right to participate and to receive a definite share of the sacrificial meat. She has duties to these lineage ancestors too. Thus whenever a shrine of a lineage founder passes to a new lineage head, a daughter of the lineage is selected by divination to fetch it to its new home. Her good or ill fortune as wife and mother depends very much on that occult arbiter of life which the Tallensi conceive of as a personal Predestined Fate (*Nuor Yin*); and this is associated with one's patrilineal ancestors. If a woman's children die one after another she is being dogged by an evil Predestiny; and only her paternal kin can perform the ritual of exorcising it. Finally, when she dies, though she is buried by her husband's lineage according to their rites, and her spirit is aggregated to those of their ancestors, since it is her sons who will sacrifice to and worship her spirit, her paternal kin also perform a short and symbolic funeral ceremony for her. Thus she is 'brought home (*mar kul*)' to be received amongst her paternal ancestors, and the cycle of her life is completed.

The Opposition between the Kinship Ties and the Marital Ties of Spouses, and its Resolution

All her life a woman is subject to the pull of her patrilateral kinship ties. As a wife, however, she must submit more and more to the contrary pull of her marital ties. Her husband is even more strongly ruled by his ties with his natal family and patrilineal kin. Many of the chances and changes of marriage come down to the question of how the partners adjust themselves to the opposing loyalties and interests associated with their divergent kinship ties. A marriage reaches stability when the partners achieve common interests and mutual bonds strong enough to hold them together in the face of their respective patrilateral kinship ties. That is why the birth of children plays such a vital part in stabilizing a marriage.

Marriage, then, is in one aspect a unique relationship between one man and one woman; in this context, peculiarities of personality influence the fate of a particular marriage. In another aspect, or more accurately, perhaps, at the other end of the scale of marriage relations, it is a union between a man and a woman who represent and remain

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578 come to demand a runaway daughter and her would-be husband's
602 lineage elders. The young man will hide the girl with friends, or use
627 other stratagems to keep her, backed up for the time being, and chiefly for form's sake, by his lineage elders. But later he may have a struggle with the head of his nuclear lineage if he is opposed to the marriage. It is not until the formal placation gift (*sɪndaan*) is sent to the girl's father with his consent and that of his lineage elders, that a truce comes, and not until the first instalment of the bride-price is paid that a promise of peace appears—which may not be for months, or even for a couple of years.

675 The placation gift and the bride-price provide an objective instrument
583 by means of which the two lineage segments which are the parties to a marriage can balance their divergent interests in and opposing rights over the woman. It is the instrument that separates the woman from her natal family—or rather, it separates her role as wife from her role as daughter, her subordination to her husband from her subjection to her father, so that the conflict between these roles is kept in check.

583 That is the meaning of the rule I once heard summed up in the
576 maxim: 'A woman must not be at her father's house when they (her husband's people) send the placation gifts. That is a taboo.' The young man who said this was protesting at the breach of this rule forced upon him by the unscrupulous action of one of the leading elders of his clan. The rule applies both to the placation gift and to the bride-price.

574 A newly wed wife, therefore, often finds herself torn between her
●593 desire to be with her husband and her loyalty and sense of duty to her parents, enhanced as this is by her respect for parental authority. Tallensi realize that she must be weaned from her attachment to her parents. Thus for the first month or two of marriage a young wife is not allowed to visit her parents, lest, as the natives say, her longing for her mother should get the better of her and she should refuse to return to her husband. Even after some years of marriage men object to young wives paying prolonged visits to their parents without good cause, as we have seen. I have often been amused at the mood of bristling suspicion which comes over a man left a grass-widower for a week or two, though he has probably consented to his wife's going on a visit and may have other wives at home. It must be admitted, however, that wives [837] run off with other men often enough after such visits to give grounds for the taunt of innate frivolity and fickleness that men throw up against the whole of the opposite sex. A woman in her father's house assumes, for the time being, the social personality of a daughter; and it is as if she is prone, then, to doff her wifehood and with it her sense of duty to her husband. Tallensi say that, if a man falls out with his father-in-law, his wife will take her husband's part when she is with him, but will side with her father at her parental home. Only after several years of marriage, with children pledging her to marital fidelity and an established relationship binding her to her husband, is she most likely to

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solve the conflict between these antithetic bonds in favour of her conjugal family.

Tallensi say that a woman is like a stranger or guest (both ideas are contained in the native word *saan*) in her husband's house during the first year or two of marriage. Standing outside the intimate life and vital concerns of the family, she cannot yet be relied upon. Gradually she grows accustomed (*malǝm*) to her conjugal family; and after some years, when she has several children, she becomes so far absorbed into the family that full trust can be reposed in her and she takes a full and self-confident part in family affairs.

It needs little observation to see how apt is this description of the gradual absorption of women into their husbands' families. On a visit to a homestead to which a newly wedded wife has just been added, one can easily observe the 'shyness (*valǝm*)', as the Tallensi call it, of the new wife (*pɔŋa*) and her husband (*sɛt*) towards each other. This goes farther than formal etiquette. Good manners require that a woman should always show respect to her husband in public. She walks behind him if they have to go anywhere together on a ceremonial occasion. She stoops or kneels whenever she offers him food or drink. But this behaviour is customary for a woman with all adult males other than her own children. It is a sign of the general attitude of respect due from women to men in a society so dominated in public social relations by the patriarchal principle. The 'shyness' of a newly married wife comes out in other ways. She tries to keep out of her husband's way as much as possible during the day, busying herself zealously with the household tasks given to her by her mother-in-law. She is submissive to all his requests. She speaks to him only when she is spoken to. She takes no initiative in anything.

This attitude is even more marked in her behaviour towards her parents-in-law (*dayaam*, pl. *dayaanam*), to whom she is bound to show formal deference at all times, and to her adult brothers-in-law, with whom she must always be circumspect because of the incest barrier which we shall discuss later. It often comes into her private relations with her husband if he is much older than she is. She will flirt and be more companionable with a young husband, in private, natives say; for he is probably like herself a *tarǝm*, junior, under authority, and connubial joys mean so much to him that he comes down to an equal footing with his wife for their sake.

The Relationships of a Wife with her Relatives-in-law

A woman does not avoid any of her relatives-in-law or her husband, nor are her relations with them regulated by strict prescription. She maintains a general attitude of deference, modesty, and complaisance towards them. A well-behaved young wife is industrious and obedient in helping her mother-in-law with her domestic work, and she will be self-effacing and deferential towards her father-in-law, her husband,

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593 851 In the joint family it marks them off as a separate and potentially independent family segment. A mother of two children usually has her own quarters, or her own part of her mother-in-law's *dug*, if her husband's mother is one of several wives of her father-in-law. She is a *dugdaana*, mistress of her rooms, in a small way, with some freedom of action where its affairs are concerned. She begins to regard the work that falls to her share, not merely as her contribution to the economy of the household, but more as serving the needs of her children and husband. He, for his part, begins to think of the future in terms of his wife and children. He may still accept a position of dependence on his father or older brother as a matter of course; but the separate needs of his wife and children are recognized in the allocation of food-supplies. He makes an effort to extend his private farm plot in order to grow a little food to tide his own family segment over lean periods. It may be many years before he achieves independence, but his aspirations towards it have a definite channel and a clear objective.

593 The greater intimacy of husband and wife, after several years of marriage, is shown in their greater familiarity with each other in public. The woman does not hesitate to address her husband by his name or title, and he may use a nickname for her. By the time a woman has grown old with her husband she is on terms of comradeship and equality with him, for she now identifies herself completely with his interests. An old couple often show great devotion to and affection for each other. The man often has such confidence in his wife that he will discuss all his affairs with her, and she can exercise considerable influence on his decisions in family matters, though the last word still rests with him. Though she still shows deference to him in public, she no longer keeps in the background. She speaks her mind freely to him and before him. Often when I have talked to men about domestic organization, kinship, marriage, children, or even their private religious and magical shrines, their wives of senior standing have stopped to join in the conversation. I have seen a lineage head's senior wife listen to a group of lineage elders thresh out a domestic squabble and give her opinion without restraint. A suitor always tries to gain the favour of a girl's mother; for, though she lacks authority to give him the girl, she can sometimes be persuaded to connive at an elopement, or at least to say a good word for him with her husband, and this may sway the balance in his favour.

593 769 Nevertheless, it is a basic assumption of the Tallensi that a wife never ceases entirely to be a 'stranger' in her husband's clan. For she never, as we have learnt, loses the social identity conferred on her by birth as a member of a different clan. She does not adopt her husband's totemic taboos; and though her health and fertility, being essential for the satisfactory performance of her wifely role, come under the guardianship of his ancestors, she does not participate in the cult of his lineage ancestors. When she attends the sacrifices made to domestic shrines by the joint

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family head, she does so as a privileged spectator. She has this privilege because her welfare is bound up with that of her husband and children, and theirs with hers. She remains outside the religious and moral solidarity of her husband's clan and maximal lineage, and, indeed, has only a contingent interest in the solidarity of his minimal lineage. It is noteworthy that women, both daughters and wives, are excluded from the esoteric ritual activities in which the moral sanctions of the unity and continuity of lineage and clan are embodied. In religious, jural, and political matters—all of which are closely interconnected—Tale women have the status of minors. This exclusion is most stringent in the case of the Earth cult and the cult of the lineage *bɔyar*. But the segregation is not so rigid as to keep women in entire ignorance of or wholly disinterested in these male monopolies. Their welfare depends upon the propitious outcome of these activities as much as that of their menfolk. They see, hear, and discuss among themselves and with their menfolk ritual affairs and jural actions that concern their husbands' lineages of which, indeed, wives and children often form the main subject. They grind the flour, brew the beer, and witness the preparations for esoteric religious rites. They see the public and semi-public phases of big religious ceremonies and overhear the endless consultations and discussions between the men which these ceremonies always produce.

A wife, therefore, can be in sympathy with the interests and can respect the values that rule the actions of her husband and her sons as members of their agnatic descent group, while being herself excluded from an effective public role in relation to them. But a cleavage remains. Thus in a conflict between her husband's clan and her father's clan she might very well take the side of the latter, not openly, it is true, but covertly. How strongly the natives feel this was shown at the divination ceremony following the death of Siiyɛlib of Tɔŋ-Seug. This divination was so cryptic and involved that I could make no sense of it. Fortunately I was able to get an explanation from one of my most trustworthy informants, a close agnate of the dead man. Siiyɛlib's death, it appeared, was a mystical retribution for a grave sin he had committed many years before. He had been one of the instigators of the white man's attack on the Hill Talis, and was an accessory, therefore, to the slaughter of many men. Now there were several Talis present at the funeral—kinsmen, affines, and, last but not least, wives of the dead man and his close agnates. If Siiyɛlib's sin were publicly brought out in the divination it would stir up all their hostile feelings. They would feel resentful towards Siiyɛlib's surviving agnates on account of his complicity in the destruction of their fathers and grandfathers. And this would produce strife between the men of Seug and their Talis wives, their Talis cognates, and their Talis affines.

The social and psychological cleavage which underlies all the relations of husband and wife is the structural kernel around which the

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basic dichotomy of *dug* and *yir* crystallizes. The comradeship which grows up gradually between husband and wife with the lapse of time is the obverse, paradoxical as it may seem, of a process of gradual emancipation of the wife. As her children grow up, the centre of gravity of her life shifts more and more to them and away from her husband. If she has a grown-up son, her interests and emotions become centred more and more on him and his family by marriage. They constitute her *dug*, in which she is secure, honoured, and titularly, if not effectively, supreme. It is her son and grandson who will honour her spirit and commemorate her in worship after her death. Her son has become the effective breadwinner, and she looks to him for sustenance. If a young woman loses her husband, her grief is aggravated because she realizes that she has lost the head and pivot of her young family and must face uprooting and readjustment to a new partner. An old woman mourns the death of her husband greatly, too, but her grief is mitigated, if she has a son, by her feeling of security and of fulfilment. The death of an adult son, especially an only son, is an irreparable tragedy to her.

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Thus it happens that a woman who has been twice married often lives, in her old age, with the oldest son of her first marriage, rather than with her husband. This was the case with Tiezien's old wife, Naaho; and the reason Tiezien and Naaho's son, Nyaaŋzum, gave for this brings out a point of the first importance. Laughing, they said, 'She is no use any longer as a wife, she can't cook; and she has no vulva now (*u le ka pɛn yaha*)—that is, her reproductive powers are finished. And they laid special stress on the last point.

A woman attains her fullest freedom in the family when she ceases to have sexual value, that is, from the native point of view, when she ceases to be reproductive.

The Sexual Relationship in Marriage

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The sexual relationship is the corner-stone of Tale marriage. At first sight this is puzzling to the observer, for the Tallensi have a thoroughly matter-of-fact attitude about sex. They regard sex as a normal and natural appetite. Any aspect of the generative functions can be discussed without circumlocution in the presence of men, women, or children. A young woman, or a girl, may show signs of shyness or coyness, but no one ever shows any real embarrassment. Bawdy or salacious talk about sex is common amongst men; very rarely does it verge on the obscene. The Tallensi take it for granted that children will indulge in sexual play, and attach no value to prenuptial chastity. In the ritual of the Arrow Medicine (*Peentee*) for protection in war, the services of a virgin boy and virgin girl are required. These children are bound to the medicine by a taboo of chastity in early childhood; but they are released as soon as they approach puberty; for by that time, the natives say, they cannot be expected to resist sexual temptation. Tallensi say

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that prenuptial love affairs between adolescents have diminished since the coming of the white man, owing to increasing scarcity of marriageable girls and the consequent decline in the age of marriage for them. Premarital motherhood, on the other hand, they regard with a certain amount of scorn. It suggests a weakness of character, but it is not so disgraceful as to spoil the girl's chances of marriage.

The norms of kinship and marriage indirectly lead to prenuptial love affairs and adultery occurring mostly between distantly related members of the same clan. Such amours, whether casual or lasting, are not considered to be incestuous. That the parties are members of the same clan does not arouse public disapprobation, nor does it bring down ritual penalties on their heads or set jural sanctions in motion against them. This makes it seem the more inappropriate to pick out the sexual tie as the corner-stone of marriage. For, as we have previously indicated, the social relations of affinity arising out of marriage are always sharply contrasted with those of kinship; and if sex relations are the essential thing in marriage they must surely be incompatible with kinship. The paradox is resolved if we take into account certain principles of kinship that will be elucidated later. It is of interest here as evidence of the distinction, characteristic of Tale ideas about sex, which the natives draw clearly between sexual relations as a mode of sensual gratification and sexual intercourse in marriage.

Tallensi often cite the maxim 'Copulation and marriage are not the same thing (*Pɛn nyɛbɔŋ ni pɔɣadir, ba ka bu kɔ'la*)'. But they also say, 'We marry for the sake of copulation'; always adding, however, 'and for the sake of children'. The sexual motive, in short, is considered to be fundamental to marriage, both for men and for women; but it is fundamental as the means to the supreme end of marriage, the procreation of children.

The Economic and Property Relations of Spouses

The significance of sex in marriage will be clearer if we consider first the economic and property relations of husband and wife. By marriage a woman is transferred from her father's authority to that of her husband, and, consequently, to that of anyone under whose authority he comes. Explaining this, Tallensi say, 'A man owns (*so*) his wife. Has he not bought (*da*) her?' This does not mean that a wife is regarded as a chattel. In fact no man would dare to say in his wife's presence that he bought her, except in jest, in an outburst of violent anger, or deliberately to insult her. The concept 'own' here means that a man has authority over and is responsible for his wife. He 'owns' her working power, in the first place. She must perform the indispensable domestic tasks connected with the preparation of food for the household, the provision of water-supplies, the care of the home and of the children, and so forth. She must help him with the sowing and the harvesting of his crops,

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581 which cannot be done without the assistance of women. He can command other services from her. For instance, nowadays he can send her
●593 to buy grain for him in distant markets and sell it for him in the home market; and he can ask for many little services that make life more comfortable for him. A man has a right to these services; but it is a right limited by the principle of reciprocity.[1] In return a man is bound to protect and care for his wife, in particular to provide her with a home, with food, and with curative treatment if she is ill.

593 There is an obvious material basis for the economic reciprocity of husband and wife. Primarily it is a function of the system of economic
592 co-operation, by means of which the household satisfies its material wants. The head of the family owns the land and the livestock from which all draw their sustenance. The men do the heavy work of farming and care for the livestock. The women perform the tasks already mentioned. Within this subsistence unit the rule of reciprocity of economic rights and duties governs the economic relations of parent and child, of brother and brother, as well as those of husband and wife. For it is an application of the wider principle that all those who pool their labour in the common task of providing food and shelter for the household are entitled, severally, to a just share in the product of their common labour.

593 The authority of husband over wife in the matter of economic duties and services is tempered, also, by a principle that really follows as a
421 logical corollary upon the principle just stated. The products of individual industry and enterprise belong to the individual, subject to the nominal over-right of anyone who has authority over him or her, in particular, of the head of the family. The rule applies to all property relations between the members of the family. Thus, as soon as a wife acquires a *dug* of her own she begins to have a certain degree of economic autonomy, and this increases with the passage of time, as her children become more and more able to do without her regular care. She has her own vegetable plot allocated to her by her husband. She often has a ground-nut plot of her own, which she cultivates herself. She has her small private store of grain, obtained by gift from her father or brothers or other kinsmen. Her vegetables, her ground-nuts, and her grain do not go into the pool of family resources. They do, however, serve to supplement these resources; for it is a woman's duty to provide the vegetable food, and it would be unthinkable for her not to use other supplies she may possess to feed her children and her husband in time of scarcity. But if her private supplies are not required for this purpose she can dispose of them as she pleases. She can exchange them for money or goods, or use them to give hospitality to her own kin or guests. The same rule holds for such things as shea fruit and shea butter, which
[437] it is a woman's duty to provide for the household. Thus, it is common for women to barter surplus shea nuts for household utensils, and these are entirely their own property.

[1] Cf. p. 213 below.

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are entirely their own property. A woman owns the sleeping-mats she makes. A potteress is in the same position as a blacksmith or leather-worker. She keeps the money or natural products for which she exchanges her pots. Nowadays many women who live near a market carry on a regular or intermittent petty trade in cooked food. Sometimes, borrowing the small capital (two or three shillings is sufficient) with which to start, they keep the profits of their trade. It is not uncommon for women to own livestock, mainly poultry but often sheep and goats, and occasionally a cow. They may be obtained by gift or purchase, in the case of small stock, or by exchanging the natural increase of small stock for more valuable stock. A woman's sheep, goat, or cow will be herded with the family livestock, but her 'ownership' (*soləm*, from *so*, to own) remains secure.

A woman's clothing, and her household utensils, most of which she provides for herself, belong to her solely. They are distributed, on her death, to her daughters, daughters-in-law, and sisters. Any money or livestock she may possess passes to her sons on her death, these being what might be called consumers' capital goods, the appropriate owners of which are men. They remain, therefore, in her *dug*, and do not accrete to the patrimonial property of her husband's effective minimal lineage. But it is an accepted principle that her husband has an over-right to them in her lifetime. For, as the natives put it, 'How can a man own his wife and not own the products of her labour?'

There is a quibble in this statement, the concept 'own' being used first in the sense of 'to have authority over', and secondly to mean 'having full rights of disposal over'—rights *in personam* being equated with rights *in rem*, to speak in lawyer's language.[1] And the Tallensi are not blind to this. Theoretically a man is entitled to utilize his wife's property as he wishes. In practice, he would not dare to do so without her consent, and the transaction is looked upon as a loan (*samər*). True, like all loans within the domestic family, it is not subject to book-keeping. But just as the woman feels morally bound to put her possessions at her husband's disposal if he is in difficulties, so her husband feels in honour bound to repay her in time, and generously, if he has any self-respect. Similarly, if a woman contracts a debt without her husband's knowledge and explicit permission he cannot be held liable. But no 'man of sense' would publicly repudiate his wife's debt. He reserves his reproaches for the privacy of the home. Significantly, a man does not, as a rule, settle his wife's debt. He will try to temporize with the creditor—an art in which the Tallensi are past masters—until his wife succeeds in finding the wherewithal to satisfy him. Or, if the husband cannot avoid paying the debt, he considers this as an advance

[1] Cf. Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., 'Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession', *Iowa Law Review*, XX. 2, Jan. 1935, for an illuminating discussion of the anthropological relevance of these legal concepts.

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593 426 which, it is tacitly understood, his wife will one day make good. Often such debts between spouses are straightened out by mutual borrowings, tacitly understood to cancel one another. Very often, however, a man has to cajole his wife with definite promises to repay before she will lend him her property. But the natives are emphatic about one point: that all such transactions belong to the give and take of marital co-operation and solidarity. It is one of the ways in which a woman stands by her husband and a man by his wife.

The Husband's Authority over his Wife

593 578 As might well be expected, these rights and duties of spouse to spouse do not rest on anything in the nature of a formal compact. There is no jural machinery or sanction by means of which a husband or wife can be compelled to perform his or her duties to his or her partner. A man can, and sometimes does, chastise his wife for incorrigible laziness, disobedience or a misdemeanour detrimental to the unity of the family. He does it usually in a fit of anger or exasperation, as one would strike a child, and not as a deliberate punishment. For though Tallensi think that such disciplinary measures are right and necessary sometimes (women being kittle cattle, who will not always listen to reason), they consider them to be a regrettable and undignified necessity not entirely in keeping with the relationship of marriage, and at bottom repugnant to a self-respecting man. That is why when a quarrel between husband and wife ends in blows, neighbours hearing the commotion rush in to separate the pair and calm the enraged husband. 'I often scold my wives', said a Tale friend to me, after a heated argument with one of them, 'but I have never, as I sit here, lifted a hand to them. How could I thrash my wife, seeing that she gave up her father and her mother to come and marry me?' To beat a wife, in short, shows a poor appreciation of her.

Women admit the right of a man to strike his wife, and they see it as a feature of the authority over her conferred on him by marriage. But in fact, cases of wife-beating are far from common. Judging by the cases I have heard of, they are least likely to occur at the two extremes of the marriage cycle. A young man fears that he may lose his wife if he beats her; an older man, as the statement quoted above shows, with a wife of long standing, feels that it is incompatible with their mutual trust and comradeship.

593 627 A woman will not, as a rule, bear a grudge for blows struck under provocation. But if she is excessively, or, in her opinion, unjustifiably thrashed, she will run away from her husband. She may go off with another man; or she may return to her father or brother, who, if he is a self-respecting man, will take her part and refuse to give her up until her husband apologizes and promises better behaviour in future. In any case, it is a troublesome affair for the husband. It is worth noting, also, that in her conjugal family only a woman's husband has the right

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to strike her. Her parents-in-law, for instance, despite their authority over her, would not do so. If anything, they would try to restrain their son from beating her. Only her husband has that combination of authority and intimacy in relation to her which permits the use of physical force upon her.

But flight is not the only weapon a woman has in order to maintain her rights and privileges in her conjugal family. Once she is fairly free from the leading strings of her mother-in-law, she is the mistress of her time and energies. It is an accepted axiom of married life, which no man questions, that a wife is free to dispose of her time as she pleases, provided she does not hamper the essential economic activities of the household, or neglect her children, or remain away from home for unwarrantable periods or at times—e.g. during the Great Festivals—when all the members of the family should be together. The routine of domestic tasks, over which men have no control, is a strong line of defence against the interference of men in their wives' disposal of their time. But differences of opinion on this matter are a common cause of squabbles between husband and wife. A young woman dresses up to go to market; her husband objects, saying that other men will be paying court to her there, or that the children will be left hungry all day; she insists; and a heated argument ensues. Nine times out of ten the woman has her way. Occasionally the husband succeeds in stopping her, by persuasion or by force. It is only at sowing or harvest time, or when, for instance, preparations for an important ceremony are in hand, that a man has full control over his wife's time.

At all times a wife's freedom to arrange her work and her leisure as best suits her may subject her husband to inconvenience. If, at the end of the day, she is too preoccupied or too tired to cook, he can but grumble and go hungry. And if he annoys her she can make a point of being too busy to attend to some want of his or too tired to cook the evening meal. This, men say frankly, is one of the strongest arguments in favour of keeping on good terms with one's wife.

Tallensi regard these utilitarian rights and duties, services and attentions of husband and wife towards each other as a most important feature of marriage. But it is clear that they do not constitute the unique relationship that distinguishes the marriage tie from other social ties of the Tallensi. Thus a woman performs much the same utilitarian services as daughter in her natal home, and as mother, wife, and daughter-in-law in her conjugal home. They are but a part of the whole configuration of co-operation, mutual help, reciprocal services, etiquette, and mutual tolerance that keep the wheels of family life running smoothly. And it is clear, also, that they imply the existence of common interests that create a sense of mutual moral obligation.

This underlying bond of mutual moral obligation is the basic sanction of reciprocity and co-operation in the domestic family. In the case of

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593 husband and wife, the man is more his wife's physical and spiritual
581 protector than her lord and master. Baŋ of Zubiuŋ-Yakɔra and Nindɔyat
[578] of Zubiuŋ-Kpaɣarayaɣar had a complicated dispute over an ancient cattle debt. It culminated in blows when Nindɔyat tried to lay hands on Baŋ's wife. That, declared Baŋ, he would not stand for.

581 A man is responsible for ensuring the beneficence of the ancestor
753 spirits and other mystical powers towards his wife; and that he does this
757 out of a sense of moral duty is evident when his wife gets ill. I well remember two particularly pathetic cases. Baripeta, a handsome, industrious, intelligent, and popular young man, had one young wife. Shortly after the birth of their child, she was stricken with leprosy. The Tallensi are generally prepared to admit that this disease is incurable by their magico-medical methods. They say that it is contagious to the sufferer's young children. The bodily corruption of the disease disgusts them, and they say that lepers are difficult to live with as they become bitter and vindictive. Baripeta knew all this as well as anybody else. His wife had become an economic and social burden instead of a helpmate. Yet he continued to cherish her, and, poor though he was, to try treatment after treatment for her, at the cost of many fowls and goats and pence. It is true that a jural principle was involved. As she had contracted the disease in his home under his care, he was responsible for her. He could not return her to her father, for instance. But it was plain from his behaviour and talk that he continued to care for her, with even greater consideration than usual, not out of submission to a customary jural rule but out of a feeling of immediate duty towards and concern for her.

It was the same with Ɔmara. His senior wife fell a victim to leprosy when her eldest children had already reached adulthood. He went to great expense in trying to get her cured. Explaining this to me, he said that, firstly, a sick person's nearest relatives never give up hope of a cure, and secondly, he was her husband, therefore he must try his utmost to save her. If he gave up she would be mortally hurt and might pine away. It was his duty to her and to her children.

The Sexual Relationship as the Corner-stone of Marriage

581 The moral bond of husband and wife is founded on their sexual relationship, conceived as the means to the end of reproduction. It is this that makes the sexual relationship the corner-stone of marriage.

581 The simplest proof of the significance of the sexual relationship is the
585 fact that a marriage is not properly consummated until coitus takes place
587 between the partners. This is seen most clearly when a widow remarries. She may be given in marriage to one of her deceased husband's brothers by the head of his effective minimal lineage, or she may be claimed by her deceased husband's brother, and may acquiesce, to begin with. If
[837] she has sexual relations with her new husband she becomes his wife, whether or not the formalities of remarriage are completed. If she

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613 581 587 This corporate interest of the husband's lineage and clan in his wife, implying, on the surface, a diffused 'ownership' of the woman, is most precisely shown in the joint leviratic rights of clansmen.[1] It is, however, not far in the background of all the relations of a woman with her husband's clansmen, individually or collectively. For it is the commonest and most commonplace expression of the corporate unity and solidarity of the agnatic descent group. And it is not an undifferentiated collective interest or right, but very clearly differentiated in accordance with the segmentation of the lineage.

581 837 ●593 The crux of this differentiation is the sexual relationship of husband and wife. As his sexual partner a woman is the wife of her husband in a rigorous sense that distinguishes him from all his clansmen, both in relation to herself and in relation to her paternal lineage and clan. Unlike the other reciprocal rights and duties of matrimony, those that pertain to sex are unconditionally binding on the spouses and strictly reserved to them. A man's authority over his wife in other respects is often shared with others—his parents, for instance. His sexual rights over her cannot be shared. In the economic management of the household a woman has some freedom of action; she has none in her sexual relationship with her husband. Nor is a husband sexually free, in the same way, for instance, as he is free to dispose of property acquired by his own efforts. Though he is nominally free to indulge in extra-marital liaisons, he can in fact only do so clandestinely and at the risk of friction with a jealous wife. Sexual relations are licit in wedlock; outside marriage they are illicit, especially for a woman; before marriage no social cognizance is taken of them if they do not involve adultery or incest. Love affairs between distant members of the same clan come into this category of tolerated illicit sex relations, hence their irrelevance to the function of sex in marriage.

848 This is a consequence of the stress Tallensi lay on legitimate parenthood, for which marriage is a *sine qua non*. Tallensi express contempt for the Gorisi who, it is notorious, often constrain a daughter to 'sit at home and bear children' to augment her father's family. Though Tallensi do not approve of a girl's bearing a child before marriage, no moral stigma attaches to her. She has no difficulty in finding a husband, if she is physically and mentally normal. Her illegitimate child (*yi-yeembii*) is welcomed by her parental family, especially if it is a daughter. For instance, Pa'anbobis has a sister, now a staid elderly woman and mother of a legitimate family, who had an illegitimate daughter in her youth. This girl was married off by Pa'anbobis's father, who was entitled to her bride-price. She bore a daughter and was then taken away from her husband because he failed to pay the bride-price. When she married again her daughter remained behind as a 'child' of the family, and Pa'anbobis will receive her bride-price. People said he was a lucky man.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iv.

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684 Badiemaal, is this how you behave?
577 Zimbil-Badiemaal will never inherit the (lineage) *bɔyar*;
Why did you copulate with Naaho's wife?

539 *Badiemaal, pɛnzierug, woo-oo!*
Bakyɛlbanɔya a bumbarəŋ.
Zimbil-Badiemaal, u a baa.

Badiemaal, i ɛŋa ywala?
Zimbil-Badiemaal ku vaa bɔyar;
I nyɛb Naah pɔya bo?

It was widely held that both of these men would take the first opportunity to get out of Taleland.

The Tallensi explain that such acts are so severely reprobated because
613 they cause deep and irreconcilable 'enmity' (*diuŋ*) between father and
684 son, brother and brother, and this is a mortal blow to the solidarity
577 of the family and the lineage. They arouse the wrath of the ancestors. If the injured father, brother, or son does not bring the matter up before the elders of his medial lineage or maximal lineage, he will be struck down by the ancestors. If he does, he must be ritually reconciled with his offending son, brother, or father. But in spite of such a formal reconciliation, 'the enmity remains within'. The sinner will never be able to offer sacrifice to his injured father with a clear conscience, or an injured son to the spirit of his father who so grievously sinned and offended him; nor may two brothers between whom this bitter inner discord prevails sacrifice together. Therefore, as the scornful song about Badiemaal declares, the sinner cannot, with a clear conscience, inherit the shrines common to the lineage; and since a man's sins spiritually taint his children and children's children, the sinner's whole line of agnatic descendants will be virtually outcast from the moral unity of the lineage, even if they are allowed to participate formally in the cult of its ancestors. Again, a man who has seduced his brother's wife cannot inherit her after his death, for he has broken the bond of brotherhood. The incestuous sexual act is sinful because it disrupts the moral relationship of father and son or brother and brother, and thus undermines the solidarity of the lineage at its core. There is a magical deterrent as well, which reflects this. If two men have sexual relations with the same woman and one of them gets ill, the other may not see him; it would cause him to sink and perhaps die; and to shun a sick parent, sibling, or child is the very negation of family solidarity.

393 A man's 'fathers', 'brothers', and 'sons' within the limits of the nuclear
613 lineage are the men who have the most direct interest in his wife, especially in her reproductive powers. They will all be concerned in, and one or other of them will be responsible for, the payment of her bride-price. His children mean almost as much to them as to him. They

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replenish the lineage. They are under the ritual and jural authority of his own or proxy father, during the latter's lifetime, and may pass into the ritual and jural custody of one of his 'brothers' on his death. If he dies, a 'brother' will have the first and strongest claim to his widow's hand. Yet these are the men who must most rigorously respect his exclusive sexual rights over his wife and most staunchly defend them against all others. Men of the same nuclear lineage can substitute for one another in all relationships of filiation; for these are the relationships that constitute them a corporate unit. They dare not usurp one another's role in the marital relationship; this would bring them into competition with one another. The sexual bond is the heart of the unique person-to-person aspect of marriage, and sexual competition the negation of the tie of common descent and the greatest source of inter-personal and inter-group conflict. Lineage and clan have a corporate interest in a wife of any member of the unit as the mother of future members of the group, and in her offspring. But no member of the unit may have a personal sexual interest in her while her husband is alive.

We can see, now, why sexual relations with a sister or a daughter are so much less reprehensible than incest with a wife of the lineage. Incest with a sister or daughter does not destroy the solidarity of the males of the nuclear lineage for it does not imply rivalry between them. She belongs to all of them equally by birth; she is genealogically and socially identified with them; she and they already have defined rights and duties and sentiments of attachment to one another; as a member of the lineage, she has as great an interest in their solidarity as they have and the physical replenishment and perpetuation of the lineage is of as much concern to her as to them. In relation to her lineage siblings, sexual gratification as a source of pleasure is distinguished from the reproductive function. In terms of the latter she is identified with the lineage as a whole. The common interest a woman's agnates have in her as a woman is in her reproductive powers being placed at the service of another genealogical group in return for the bride-price, and not, as in the case of a wife, in her reproductive powers serving the interests of their own group.[1] If a man desires his sister or daughter sexually it must be a matter of mere lust (*kərih*), a foolish impulse, and not an expression of his desire for progeny as a socially mature adult. The gratification of lust, contemptible as it is in these circumstances, does not shatter the moral unity or injure the common interests of the lineage as does the usurpation of procreative rights over a wife. It does not, like the latter, destroy a father's authority over his son or a son's filial piety towards his father; for though it is a perversion of the social role of father or brother, it is not a usurpation of critical rights.

What has been said of the nuclear lineage applies in only slightly lesser degree to the inner lineage—the widest corporate unit responsibly

[1] Cf. p. 250 below.

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765 a man dies leaving young wives without infants his funeral ceremonies
581 are hurried on. Tallensi do not believe that young widows without
834 infants will remain chaste for long out of a sense of duty or for fear of mystical penalties. A man's widow, in short, remains his wife, sexually bound to him, as long as his social personality continues to be recognized. Death alone does not expunge a man's social personality. The management of his property, his social roles, and all his rights and responsibilities, continue to be exercised by proxy in his name after his death until his [768] funeral ceremonies are finished; for it is by these ritual acts that his social personality is expunged. His property then passes to his heir, his social roles to his successor, and his widow is free to remarry.

The Husband's Relationship with his Affines

●593 The sexual bond of husband and wife is also, as we have noticed, the
562 critical element that discriminates a woman's marital relationship with her husband from her filial relationship with her father or with anyone who takes over his social role. As we have mentioned before, the economic duties and rights of a woman in her conjugal family are not very different from those that she exercises in her natal family before marriage or if she comes to live with the latter at any time. Her jural status as a minor under her husband's or father-in-law's authority corresponds to her jural status in her father's family. It is essentially with respect to her reproductive capacity that her role and status as wife and mother are sharply separated from her role and status as daughter and sister.

This will be clearer if we look first at the general rules and conventions of a son-in-law's relations with his father-in-law's family and lineage.

602 The term *deema* (pl. *deenam*), affine, correctly used applies to wife's
562 parent and daughter's husband, and to anyone identified with them in a particular situation. It is the self-reciprocal term of address between these relatives, as well as the term of reference for them. I have heard it used as a special gesture of consideration and courtesy by a man to his brother's wife, but this is not usual. For the relationship between affines, in the Tale sense of this term, is not quite the same as that of a woman with her husband's parents and siblings. A man's affines have no authority over him. The tensions connected with common residence are absent. There are no common economic, jural, or ritual interests between affines.

602 As in all Tale social relations, differences of personality and the flexi-
606 bility of custom result in variations in the actual behaviour of affines to one another that sometimes obscure the real nature of the relationship. I have seen a man chaff his mother-in-law (*deempɔk*) in a way that would be regarded as excessively familiar by the majority of natives. In a well-established marriage one often finds great friendliness and mutual good-

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596 centripetal pull of the *yir* in the economic sphere that the habit of co-operation and mutual help between the women of the household goes deeper as a rule than their inclination to think of their own *dugət* first. Thus there is a great deal of voluntary mutual aid between the women of the household. The things a woman owns she guards jealously; but she will often lend gladly to another woman of the household on the basis of the true reciprocity that prevails in family affairs. A woman who has prepared a new supply of shea butter, for instance, usually gives some to each of the other women of the household, knowing that some day she will receive gifts of a similar kind from them.

596 854 855 It is in the children of a family that the balance between *dug* and *yir* is most precisely embodied. They represent both the differentiation of *dug* from *dug* and the synthesis of all the *dugət* in the *yir*, in their most significant aspects. Thus, all the children of a man are formally the children of all his wives, and this might include the children of his brothers too. The women of a family, and especially co-wives, usually help one another a great deal in caring for one another's children. This commences with child-birth. As we have seen, the care of a parturient woman falls largely on her co-wives and other women of the same family. A new-born child is not given the breast at once by its mother but by another nursing mother; and a nursing co-wife would be the first person to be called upon. Later, the infant will often be left in the care of a co-wife for an hour or two or a whole day at a time if its mother has to be away from home. If a woman dies leaving young children, they are reared by her co-wives as a rule. When a girl becomes pregnant for the [295] first time, it is one of her mother's co-wives who has the honour and duty of ceremonially girding her with the matron's perineal band. Co-wives often take pride in and show great devotion to one another's children. This is especially true of a senior wife past the age of child-bearing. Such a woman, identifying herself closely with the husband and being herself no longer engrossed in her own young children, mothers the children of her younger co-wives with zealous devotion.

593 736 And yet, as the natives constantly repeat, the relation of mother and child is unique. Its mother's co-wife can never be the same to the child as its own mother. A woman cannot have the same feelings towards her co-wife's child as towards her own child. The lot of an orphan, Tallensi say, even in a household full of women, is always a hard one. An orphan never receives the devoted attention and the selfless love which can be given only by its own mother. It has to depend upon the mercy and the sense of duty of women who are its mothers only in name.

602 736 This is the reason why small children left orphans are sometimes sent to live with their maternal grandmothers until they are big enough to fend for themselves. Some months after his mother's death I met Gundaat, a pathetic little chap of about 9. Talking about various things, we got on to the subject of mothers. Gundaat told me, in a tone of

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resignation that was touching in the circumstances, that he missed his mother dreadfully. When she was alive, he explained, he never went to bed hungry. She always had something for him to eat even in the leanest times. But nowadays he often slept hungry; for his other 'mothers' had their own children to think of; in times of scarcity they would put aside extra food for their own children but not for him. At best he might get the scraps.

The genealogical and social differentiation of a woman and her children from every other woman and her children of the same domestic family is the kernel of the notion of uterine (*soog*) descent. The cultural definition of this notion gets its psychological content, its meaning for the individual, from the relations of mother and child and co-wife to co-wife.

To every woman, therefore, her own children are the most complete incarnation of her own social self, of her autonomy and status in the family, and of the differentiation of her *dug* from those of her co-wives. That is what the concept *soog* means for a mother in relation to her children. Emotionally wrapped up in them as she is, she becomes almost anarchical in her concern for their welfare. There are women who resent it strongly if a co-wife scolds one of their children; and it is quite common for a woman to get into a fury if her child is struck by a co-wife's child, let alone by a co-wife herself. Many quarrels between co-wives begin in this way. That is why children are taught to keep out of their mothers' co-wives' rooms as much as possible and to behave carefully if they go into them.

The ever-present tension between co-wives, reduced to a minimum at most times, occasionally bursts out acutely. This is liable to happen if a child gets ill of a malady that defies all attempts to cure it, the more so if it is an unusual sickness of sudden onset. The distracted mother is likely then to turn on a co-wife (another wife of her husband, or a wife of one of his brothers) whose own children are well and happy and therefore the bitterest reminder of her evil fortune. Being co-wives the women are sure to have had differences and even quarrels in the past. So now the sick child's mother accuses her co-wife of being a witch (*yɔi*) and of having caused the illness of the child. Infrequent as accusations of witchcraft were in former days and are now, Tallensi say that most of them were made by women against a co-wife owing to the illness or death of a child. This is the more significant in view of the association between witchcraft and uterine descent. An accusation of witchcraft brands a woman and her children equally, but it does not impugn the male line or, consequently, the *yir*.

When hostility between co-wives reaches this pitch it cannot but result in a serious disturbance of the unity and cohesion of the family. Formerly, as we have learnt, the accused woman might have been compelled to undergo the arrow ordeal, or would herself, backed by her

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CHAPTER V

PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LINEAGE

Some General Principles Recapitulated

ALL Tale genealogical connexions go back to the fact of procreation. Hence the relations of parents and children are the focal point of the whole kinship system. Our task here is to investigate the notion of *dɔyam* in its primary social context.

We have emphasized elsewhere that the social structure of the Tallensi is not intelligible if it is stripped of its temporal dimension.[1] The essence of the lineage system is its continuity in time; from this comes its strength and its stability. But it might have been otherwise. Such a system might well, with each generation, grow narrower and more rigid in all its parts, like an endogamous aristocratic caste. Or it might, as has happened with the Tallensi, spread itself more and more widely by continual ramification and so keep its strength without losing suppleness.

How has this come about? The central dynamic factor is the pattern of relations between parents and children, especially between fathers and sons. The continuity of the lineage is a continuity of successive generations, and this has two aspects. There is the straightforward, cumulative continuity of descent, epitomized in the notion of patrilineal descent; and there is the dialectical continuity of the filial generation ousting and replacing the paternal generation. In terms of patrilineal descent, father and son are identified with each other and united by common interests; in terms of the sequence of generations, they are not. Indeed, there comes a time in the lives of father and son when they almost seem to be rivals. In a lesser degree this holds also for mothers and daughters. We shall have a good deal to say on this topic in what follows.

The strength and stability of the Tale social system is in part a result of the institutionalized means the culture offers for the reconciliation of conflicting motifs in the focal field of social relations. They enable a balance to be struck between the common interests of successive patrilineal generations and their divergent interests due to the difference of generation, as well as between the centripetal pull of the agnatic line and the centrifugal drive of matrilateral kinship. The principle of reciprocity is of outstanding importance in this context; and the structural mould that makes these reconciliations possible is the ramifying form of the lineage.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iii, and my paper 'Descent in the Social Structure of the Tallensi', *Africa*, July 1944.

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593 It is useful to keep these general principles in mind in considering the details to which we must now give our attention. Putting it broadly, the relations of parents and children can be grouped in three general categories: relations of identification; of opposition or contra-identification; and of reciprocity; and the pattern in each individual case is the product of the interaction of these three categories. Our interest will lie chiefly in the structurally significant norms which give coherence and consistency to the multifarious variety of actual behaviour.

The Importance of 'Rearing'

181 We know that Tallensi regard the possession of offspring, particularly of sons, as the supreme purpose of life. To live long enough to see one's sons' children—to 'reach grandchildren (*paa yaas*)' as the natives say—is a gift surpassing all material wealth. Tallensi believe that it is better to die in poverty and leave children than to die childless but rich. We have seen, also, that they hold it to be the ideal of normal parenthood for physiological and social parenthood to coincide. This is more than a question of conferring social status by descent. From the native standpoint the important thing is that a child's natural parents are the right people to rear it, educate it, and control it.

861 Tallensi say that *ughug*, bringing up a child, is as vital a part of parenthood as *dɔɣam*, bearing or begetting. There is a proverb, [538] 'Rearing is more important than bearing (*Ughug n-gaat dɔɣam*)', often [431] quoted when they comment on the devotion of a person to a proxy or foster-parent. This is socially recognized in the obligation to give a 'cow of rearing (*ughug na'ah*)' to a foster-father out of the bride-price cattle received for a foster-daughter by her natural parent or guardian, and for a foster-son, when he returns to his natal home. It is, to be sure, only a moral obligation, but no self-respecting native would evade it. It is a recompense for the troubles the foster-father had to endure in bringing up the child. Tallensi feel strongly that it is not enough to bring a child into the world; one must also bring it up successfully, and that is the hardest part.

593 In spite of reshufflings due to widows remarrying and the instability 855 of early marriages, the majority of Tale children grow up with their natural parents. A census taken in 1934 showed that of 170 children estimated to be under 16 selected at random in one settlement, nearly 78 per cent. were living with their own parents. Approximately 20 per cent. were in the care of one natural parent and one proxy parent, and only 2 per cent. were orphans cared for by more distant kin.

593 Tallensi perceive that the social and personal relationships of a 861 particular parent with his or her children are a result very largely of the way the children are brought up. They stress the influence of 828 individual differences in personality in these relationships. There is always a personal bias in the way people interpret the accepted norms

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and conform to them. Extreme cases illustrate this best. There is the harsh disciplinarian whose sons fret under his control and often take the first opportunity of running away. Sayəbazaa was said to have been a man of this kind—puritanical, industrious, and inclined to be over-strict with his children. Four of his sons left him to seek work abroad. He made his daughters marry men he chose for them, and when one of them ran away with another man he whipped her and sent her back to her first husband. At the opposite extreme are men like Guna'ab and Ycanborigya. They are casual and irresponsible. Guna'ab's sons were often pointed out as an example of bad parental influence. They did not farm but tried to earn a living by trading in chickens; they were reputed to be lazy and extravagant, and showed no respect to their father or his brothers—'just like their father', people said.

Nevertheless, it is a fundamental axiom that the ties of rearing do not wipe out the absolutely binding ties of procreation (*dɔɣam*). Whether a person is reared by his own parents or not, whether he is badly or well brought up, nothing can erase the binding ties between parents and children. It is desirable for children to be brought up by their natural parents because then there will be no contradiction between the ties of *dɔɣam* and the adventitious ties of affection created by upbringing.

By Tale custom, if a woman leaves a husband by whom she has had a child and is properly married to another man, the child lives with her during its infancy. When it is five or six years old it can be claimed by its natural father. This is called 'separating (*pɔhɔg*)' it from its mother. Tallensi think it immoral to separate a child from its mother before it is well able to fend for itself. I once heard a group of elders expostulate angrily with a man for taking his two children, aged about 4 and 7, from their mother who had married another man. The elders said the children would not thrive in the care of another woman; their father was acting out of sheer malice. He would be well advised to leave them with their mother for another three or four years and then claim them. Their prophecy was right, for the children pined away and both died within a year. This is an extreme case. But it is a good illustration of a problem that often arises when men claim the custody of their children from an ex-wife. A compromise between the claims of natural parenthood and jural paternity has to be struck which will not endanger the child's life.

Rights and Duties of Parents

We shall have much to say about the rights and duties of parents and children in this book and it will be useful to list here briefly the most important of them. The central fact is the dominance of the father in all social relations; but this is balanced by the personal equality of the parents in the intimate domestic sphere.

A father's first duty to his children is to provide them with food.

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593 He is not bound to provide them with clothes, but a good father buys a loin-cloth for a small son and may give a daughter money to buy a waistband and the materials for her back-flap (*voog*). He should also allow his adult sons the time and opportunity to work a little for themselves and so earn enough to buy clothes. He may allow them to wear some of his clothes, on special occasions.

It is a father's duty to send for and pay someone who has the necessary medicine to treat his child in illness. He must consult a diviner to find out what the illness is due to and must perform the sacrifices prescribed by the diviner to help in the cure. This is one aspect of the father's responsibility for the general welfare of his children. Great importance is attached by the Tallensi to the father's duty of making sacrifices to the ancestors on behalf of his children.

A father is jurally responsible for his sons and unmarried daughters. This is not particularly significant or onerous until children reach adolescence. Little notice is taken of damage caused by a child. But if it is serious—for example, if small boys allow cattle they are herding to damage crops—the injured party can inflict condign punishment on the culprits. He will also protest to their fathers. A father's responsibility for his children is of chief importance in questions of marriage. Thus a father is responsible (within the limits of his lineage status) for his son's bride-price payments and for any breaches of custom, involving conflict with other lineages or clans, that his child commits. In theory a father is also responsible for a son's debts unless they are of a petty kind. If his son gets mixed up in a fight he must appear with him in court. He must take steps to effect a ritual reconciliation with a lineage or clan to which injury has been caused by his son or daughter.

A father's rights are more comprehensive. He 'owns' (*so*) his children. He has the right and the duty of disciplining them. Hence he has the right to inflict corporal punishment on them. In the old days he could, in theory, sell them into slavery if he wished, and a few cases are known of this having occurred. But such an act, like any action that endangers the child's life, is morally reprehensible. He has the right to pawn (*zien talɔma*) a son or daughter in return for a loan, and I know of several such cases that occurred before the coming of British rule. This practice has, however, become almost obsolete since it is feared that the Administrative Officers will prosecute anyone found to have pawned a child. A father has the right to dispose of a daughter in marriage as he pleases and to use her bride-price as he pleases. He can do it in such a way as to make her in effect a pawn for a loan which will later be reckoned as an instalment of her bride-price. Men often give a young daughter of 9 or 10 years and upwards to someone from whom they receive loans. The girl is virtually a pawn (*talɔma*), and the understanding is that when she is old enough she will marry a member of the lender's family. If, when the time comes, she refuses to do so, her

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father may marry her off to someone else and will repay the loan out of her bride-price. A father has the right to take his daughter away from a husband whom he objects to.

A father has full disposal over his son's labour and skill. He also has an over-right over any personal property his son may acquire by his private enterprise. He decides whether his son shall live and farm with him or set up his own household.

A father's rights and duties have no legal sanctions in Tale society. They rest on a moral basis being inherent in the form of economic co-operation and property relations, the jural and ritual customs, and the whole complex of mutual dependence in family and lineage. They are never stated as a formal code by the natives, as we have done here, though explicitly recognized by them.

A mother's rights and duties are less precisely defined. Though they have the same basis and sanctions, at bottom, as paternal rights and duties, this is not so overt in native thought or practice. The affective basis of the relations of mother and child has a different tone to that of the relations of father and child. Hence many of a mother's rights are, in practice, dormant. Thus she is entitled to thrash her children, but it would be considered unbecoming and even unnatural in a mother to do so except under extreme provocation.

A mother has the right to the obedience and the respect of her children. She controls her daughter's work in the domestic sphere in tasks such as cooking, fetching water and firewood, and so on, but not in extra-domestic productive activities. For women's work in agriculture (e.g. harvesting) daughters come under their father's orders. A mother is entitled to assistance from her sons in the cultivation of her private vegetable and ground-nut plots. If her son is married, a mother has the right to leave all her domestic chores to be done by her daughter-in-law. A mother has the right to receive small gifts, such as tobacco and guinea-fowls, from her daughter's suitors. She may accept more substantial gifts, such as money and hoes, and in return pledge herself to help the suitor to elope with her daughter, even if this is contrary to her husband's intentions. If her daughter is married by arrangement, the mother is entitled to certain formal gifts of guinea-fowls and grain from the bridegroom's people. She is entitled to ask for help from her daughter's husband in roofing her rooms and in other tasks that are of concern to herself only. She is entitled to gifts of guinea-fowls and yams or sweet potatoes from her daughters' husbands at the time of the Harvest Festival. But most important of all is a mother's right to be supported by her sons from the time that they become capable of farming. Whether she has a husband or not, she will generally live with a son after she gets past the age of child-bearing.

A mother's chief duties are to care for her children in childhood. She must cook for them and see that they are fed. She must nurse them

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593 in illness. She is mainly responsible for their training in habits of cleanliness. She also has to teach her daughters housekeeping skills.

This formal summary is interposed here as a means of orientating our analysis. The reality, we shall find, is not so simple.

Classificatory Parents and Own Parents

593 855 736 Tallensi affirm that no one can wholly take the place of a person's own parents. A child may be brought up by its dead father's brother or dead mother's co-wife. Outwardly there is nothing to distinguish the relationship of such a child, during its pre-adolescent years, to its proxy parent from that of a child living with its natural parent. Men or women point with pride and affection to orphans in their custody as 'my children'. They claim to care for them as conscientiously and devotedly as for their own children. But, the natives say, there is always something lacking; and observation shows that the affective ties of proxy parent and child are much weaker than those of natural parent and child. Sometimes, indeed, there is an acknowledged emotional barrier between them.

One can see this in young children like Gundaat, whose story is told in a previous chapter (p. 130). A young child is more restrained, more formal, with a proxy parent than with a natural parent. Boys seem to be less amenable to proxy parents than to own parents, especially as they approach adulthood. When young men who have been abroad, working in Ashanti or the Colony for a period of years, are questioned about their motives for leaving home, the commonest reason they give is the death of a parent. 'My father (*ba*) died, and my junior father (*ba-pit*) took over the house (*die yir*) and so I went away', is the usual formula. One soon discovers that there was always some tension and often friction between the youth and his father's brother. The youth says that his *ba-pit* did not treat him properly; and when one questions his *ba-pit*, he usually says 'the boy did not respect (*nan*) me'. This is a modern development of what is a deeply ingrained feature of Tale social organization. A man will often continue to live and farm with his own father until the latter's death. I know men of 40 and over who are still living with their own fathers. But very rarely does this happen with a father's brother. A dead man's sons break away from the parental home when a father's brother inherits it as soon as they are able to. In such a case there is usually a convergence of different factors of segmentary differentiation in the lineage. The emotional cleavage serves as the catalyst that directs and accelerates the normal processes of splitting along economic and structural lines of cleavage.

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This is the negative aspect of the idea that one's natural parents should be one's social parents, as it appears in the classificatory extension of the parent–child relationship. On the positive side it follows from this conception that all those who are socially identifiable with

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one's parents and play a part in one's upbringing can, and in certain circumstances must, stand to one in the relation of proxy parents. The rule applies most directly to the men and women of the same domestic unit who are identified with one's parents by generation and by social role—to one's father's brothers (*sunɔɔp*), including his full and half-brothers and first cousins on his father's side, who are his prospective successors; and to one's mother's co-wives (*nentaas*). If these men and women all belong to the same household they are directly concerned with the production of food, the provision of shelter, and the satisfaction of the other wants of the unit upon which the physical welfare and growth of a child depends. If the men belong to relatively autonomous economic units but to the same domestic unit, they will nevertheless have a common interest in the family patrimony, to the inheritance of which they all have rights, and a common ritual dependence on the immediate ancestors of the nuclear lineage. The women will sometimes help in caring for one another's children; the men will sometimes help one another in farming and always act as a unit in ritual and jural matters under the authority of the most senior of them. And the ritual care of a child is of as much importance as its physical care. A child will not thrive (*maan*) if it is not under the spiritual wing of its patrilineal ancestors, as we have learnt.

Outside the domestic unit the terms *ba* (father) and *ma* (mother) and the distinctive modes of behaviour correlated with them, are not extended beyond the expanded family (i.e. the family cluster built up on the inner lineage) in normal circumstances. The only exception is in the case of a uterine kinsman or kinswoman of a parent, who is identified with the foundress of the uterine line and is therefore described as a 'father' or 'mother' irrespective of genealogical distance.[1]

Within the clan or maximal lineage it is a cardinal rule that generation differences are not recognized beyond the limits of the inner lineage. 'Begetting does not cross the (inner) lineage—*dɔŋam pu yakɔt dug la*' is the Tale maxim. This is correlated with the structural relations of the inner lineage to lineage segments of higher order. The inner lineage is likely to be the widest segment with a common interest in patrimonial land. In relation to the clan or the maximal lineage it is usually the smallest recognized corporate segment, whose members are significant for the clan only as members of the segment. As will be remembered, it is also the unit within which sexual relations with a co-member's wife are definitely sinful. In short, the inner lineage (and the family cluster which is its residential and familial correlate) marks the limit beyond which a person takes part in corporate activities not in his own right and in his personal capacity but as a member of the

[1] Kinship terms without inverted commas stand for the primary meaning of the terms, e.g. (natural) father; those between inverted commas stand for the extended or derived meaning of the term, e.g. (classificatory) 'father'.

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602 613 segment. Clansmen beyond these limits are no longer concerned with the rearing of a child. They are not directly involved in either the economic or the educational or the ritual responsibility for its passage through life. Hence they all fall into the broad category of clan kin (*yidem*) or clan brethren (*mabiis*) irrespective of age or generation, though individuals among them might be addressed by specific kinship terms, in certain situations, as an honorific gesture. Tallensi feel that [736 768] a mother's brother (*ahɔb*) is a nearer kinsman than a contemporary of one's father of another inner lineage of the same clan; and while it is not uncommon for an orphan to go and live with his *ahɔb*, it is very rare for an orphan to join the household of a clansman of a different inner lineage.

602 613 593 Tale jural and ritual institutions show, and intelligent informants perceive quite clearly, that the emotional elements in the relationship of parent and child are distinct from the jural and moral elements. There are both pragmatic and ritual sanctions for the latter but not for the former. Indeed the emotional elements sometimes serve as a sanction or as a rationalization of conduct in the relations of parents and children. With natural parents the emotional elements and the jural and moral elements of the relationship are completely interfused. With proxy parents the former yield precedence to the latter, and it is often easier to study the jural and moral elements of the relationship with proxy parents than with own parents. The widest range within which the relationship of successive generations is recognized is principally distinguished by ritual and ceremonial customs. We thus get a series [601] beginning with people who will describe each other, if questioned, as 'my own father (mother) (*m-mɛŋ ba* (*ma*))' and 'my own child (*m-mɛŋ bii*)', or by some equivalent phrase; stretching to those who refer to each other as *ba-pit* or *ma-pit*, younger father or mother (or if it is a father's older brother or mother's older co-wife, *ba-bier* and *ma-bier*), and *bier*[1] *bii*—child of older sibling of the same sex (or *pit bii*—child of younger sibling of the same sex); and ending with people who say of their classificatory parent or child 'I only call him father (mother, child) (*mbuon u la mba* (*ma, bii*))'. There is always a physical difference of generation between own parents and children, generally such a difference between close proxy parents and their siblings' or co-wives' children, but quite often little or no difference of age between classificatory parent and child at the limit of the range. It is quite a common thing to meet

[1] *Bier* is the common term for senior by age or generation; but it is a curious point that the usage quoted above is not exclusive. Tallensi also describe a father's older brother as *ba-kpeem* (elder father), and a mother's older co-wife as *ma-kpeem*. But this form is more commonly used to refer to a grandparent. The context makes it clear whether the reference is to a proxy parent or a grandparent. The use of *kpeem* instead of *bier* may be a borrowing from the Gonja and Namnam, whose dialects are closer to Mole than to Dagbane and who have the dialect variants *kema* and *yɛbaga* for senior and junior.

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children of about the same age playing together who are classificatory parent and child. A 9- or 10-year-old will explain that he calls his companion 'father' or 'child' because 'my father begot (*dɔŋa*)—or was begotten by—his father and calls him child—or father', using the concept *dɔŋ* in its generalized sense of a recognized relationship of belonging to successive generations.

The decisive tests are in terms of the jural and ritual relations in which kinship comes into action, and not in terms of a count of generations. Thus paternal authority is an aspect of the organization of productive co-operation in the household; it accompanies defined property rights, and entails jural responsibilities in matters like marriages and deaths as well as ritual duties to the ancestors. These are the things that make up a father's social role. Postponing further consideration of this for the present, we may note that, broadly speaking, three zones can be discerned within the limits of the inner lineage. First, that of Ego's natural parents, who exercise the full social roles of parents; second, that of Ego's proxy parents, seldom more distantly related to the natural father than agnatic second cousins (and their wives), and distinguished by the fact that they share and may take over the social roles of the natural parents; and third, that of Ego's classificatory parents, who are most unlikely (for no rigid line of demarcation can be laid down) to take on the true parents' social roles. The authority and responsibility of a classificatory father is of a general nature, and a man is subject to it only in virtue of his lineage membership.

As we shall find later, these principles hold not only for the classificatory extension of parent–child relationships but also for siblings and matrilateral kin. The regulating mechanism is the lineage structure.

We are defining the gradations that can be observed in the tone and emphasis of the parent–child relationship in the broadest terms. We are speaking of norms; and as we have previously remarked, the norms do not always emerge as simply as this in the actual relations of parents and children. They are subject to the distorting influence of many social and personal factors in this as in other departments of Tale life. Da'amo'o, who ran away from home as a boy when his mother died, must have had very little love for his old father, who was, by all accounts, a hard, arrogant, and demanding martinet. Baŋ, on the other hand, who lost his own father in early childhood and grew up under the care of a distant lineage-brother of his father, Tendaan Gieŋ, whom his widowed mother married, was deeply attached to the latter.

As in most primitive societies, there are always a number of people whom a Taleŋ, child or adult, will refer to as his 'father' or 'mother', or 'child', at any given time. But, as has already been suggested, a natural parent or own child is clearly distinguished from others to whom one stands in the same social relationship. It is enough to visit a large domestic family for half an hour, at a time when the whole

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family is at home, to see this, especially where young children are concerned. With adults the discrimination is not so obvious in the ordinary daily routine as with children. I have seen a babe of six months left in the care of its mother's co-wife, whimper and strain eagerly towards its mother when it saw her arrive at the homestead with a load of firewood in the company of two other women of the household. An older child will run to its own mother for protection, if it is frightened, clutching her knees and thrusting its face between her thighs. A small boy of 3 to 6 years of age will try to follow his own father about wherever he can; and a little girl of this age hangs around her own mother, as she gets on with the household tasks, in a way that would be impossible with her mother's co-wife. On the other side, one can easily notice the difference between the sympathy and often grief of a woman over the illness or death of a co-wife's child and the utter prostration into which a mother falls if such a misfortune strikes her own child. Similarly, a man shows deep concern over the sickness or death of his brother's child. He will abandon a visit he has planned to a relative, give up work for the day, shelve any plans he may have made; for next to a death, nothing is so upsetting to a Tale household as the illness of a child. But this is as nothing compared with his grief over the death, or his distress at the illness of his own child.

This affective discrimination of own parents and own children is the psychological counterpart of the differentiation of descent lines within the lineage and of segments within the family. Sentiment and structural relationships go hand in hand and the ritual superstructure of Tale society mirrors both. This consistency of the total scheme of social relationships means that we can make inferences about aspects of the relationship between parents and children that are not expressed in their ordinary intercourse, from ritual ideas and practices and from the changing pattern of co-operation and association between them. The fact that a man can only sacrifice directly to the spirits of his own parents and to antecedent ancestors through his own parents, and not to or through the spirits of proxy parents, is as important a factor in the unique bond of parent and child as the fact that a child is usually brought up by his own parents.

Structural arrangements and ritual ideas show that, in spite of the precise discrimination of own parents and own children, proxy and classificatory parents do have a parental role even during the lifetime of own parents. They take pride in these children, and speak of them as 'my children'. Everyone who is 'father' or 'mother' to a person must be treated with the respect due to a parent and has some degree of authority over him or her. I recall one day seeing Sinkawol, a young man of about 25, instructing Kyekambɛ, a lively boy of about 12, in a task connected with house-building. They both belonged to the inner lineage of which Nyaaŋzum of Kpata'ar was the head. This lineage

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presents a remarkable jumble of ages and generations owing to the longevity and protracted fertility of its founder, Kuŋkɔŋki. Because a period of about fifty years elapsed between the birth of Kuŋkɔŋki's first son and the birth of his youngest son, the latter's children are 'fathers' to his older brothers' children some of whom are three or four times their age. That is how Sinkawol came to be the classificatory 'son' of Kyekambɛ. Now and then Sinkawol had to speak sharply to his pupil. I asked if he would hit the boy if he did not obey his instructions. 'Oh no', replied Sinkawol gravely, 'I cannot strike him. He begot me. He is my father. If he were my brother or my son I wouldn't hesitate to clout him.' Kyekambɛ could not exercise authority over Sinkawol owing to his social immaturity and inexperience. But he would take precedence of Sinkawol in matters of inheritance, and when he grew up would be entitled to precede Sinkawol in rights of succession to ritual office, if he wished to.

Proxy and classificatory parents also feel a responsibility for the welfare of their 'brothers' ' children. Thus if two brothers have separate households, they are not obliged to assist each other with food in times of shortage; and pride restrains a man from asking for help from a brother who is economically independent of him. I have seen men grow wan with hunger, through living for days on end on nothing but wild herbs; but they would never ask for assistance from their better-off brothers. It is up to the latter to offer a gift of grain voluntarily. And when such a gift is given (it is usually only 3 or 4 lb. of grain, enough for a couple of meals) it is offered as a gift for the children and their mothers. The giver will send a calabashful of grain to his brother's wife, with a message that it is for the children. As the natives always say, 'Your brother's children are your children. You cannot see them growing thin with hunger and let them starve.' A woman, too, will sometimes give food to the children of a co-wife of the same joint family, if the two women get on well together.

A proxy parent's authority over his or her classificatory children during their own parent's life cannot be exactly defined. It depends on the situation in which authority is exercised, on the personalities and economic relationships of the people concerned, and especially on the genealogical closeness of own parent and proxy parent. Ɔmara and Saandi are agnatic first cousins (brothers, in native terms) occupying adjoining semi-detached homesteads. They do not farm together. Saandi has no direct responsibility for feeding Ɔmara's children or for educating them. He is, however, directly interested in their welfare and upbringing. For as the head of the nuclear lineage, he must be consulted, and will have an influential, though not the decisive voice in all matters of a jural or ritual kind affecting Ɔmara's children—such matters, for instance, as the marriage of a son or daughter, or the rites of placing a child under the ritual guardianship of an ancestor. If he

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sees any of Ɔmara's children misbehaving he can stop them and punish them if necessary. But ordinarily, though he can scold Ɔmara's children, he would cause grave offence to Ɔmara if he were to strike them. When, to quote a case that occurred in a similar structural setting, Pumaan's son threw a stone at Zaŋ's (Pumaan's younger brother's) wife, Zaŋ shouted anathemas at the boy and complained to the neighbours but dared not whip him; that was Pumaan's prerogative. For Zaŋ and Pumaan have separate households and are both sticklers for their rights. By contrast, Bɔyazie, who lives and farms with his older brother and gets on extremely well with him, can command obedience from and can discipline the latter's children by corporal punishment if need be. But even in such a case a man might hesitate to strike his brother's children if he and his brother were not on terms of the greatest mutual trust. If Saandi asks his brother's son to do an errand or a job for him the boy will usually obey, but he cannot be compelled to do so, as he can by his own father. Co-wives, as we know, are particularly cautious in dealing with one another's children.

There is, however, at any given time, only one man who has full paternal authority over a person, child or adult. In the first instance it is the man who begot him or her; and if this man dies, it is the man who takes on his social role, that is his distinctive rights and duties, by inheritance. The critical rights and duties are those connected with the land and other patrimonial property which the child's father owned or was heir to, and those connected with the cult of the child's father's father. In practice this means the head of the household to which the child belongs, who is also the person who sacrifices to the child's grandfather's spirit; and this limits the range to the child's father's brothers by the same father.

During a child's minority a father's agnatic cousin (brother in native terms) may act *in loco parentis* if the father's nearer male agnates are lacking; but it is a position of trusteeship rather than of full paternal authority. The son will set up an independent household as soon as he is able to farm for himself. He will then take possession of any land which his father acquired by his own efforts and will become the effective owner of, for example, bride-price cattle obtained for his own sister, though he cannot dispose of them without the formal consent of the head of the nuclear lineage. In relation to an adult, a father's cousin (or remoter classificatory 'brother' of the same inner lineage) retains only the ritual and jural attributes of a father; and this chiefly in virtue of being head of the inner or nuclear lineage to which the person belongs. Important as these attributes are, they represent a less direct and personal authority than that of one's own or one's proxy father.

We shall see later that the relations between grandchildren (*yaaŋ*, pl. *yaas*) and grandparents (*yaab-doog* or *ba-kpeem*, masc. *yaab-pɔk* or

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ma-kpeem, fem.) are a foil to those of parents and children. It is convenient here to state the range within which grandparents are acknowledged. On both the mother's side and the father's side grandparents are primarily one's own parent's own parents. The terms are extended to own grandparents' siblings (in particular to a grandfather's brothers) and their wives, but rarely beyond that limit, and never, in my experience, beyond a grandfather's agnatic cousin. This is correlated with the cycle of development of the joint family. By the time a man has grandchildren he is not likely to be still sharing a homestead with his brother, let alone cousin, and his classificatory siblings will have only a formal interest in his grandchildren.

The diagram on p. 148 sums up this discussion of the range of parenthood acknowledged by the Tallensi.

The Significance of 'Having no Father alive'

Clearly the formula 'Begetting does not cross the (inner) lineage' covers a complicated tissue of social relationships. Another aspect of it appears in the significance Tallensi attach to whether or not one's father is alive.

This is a matter of considerable practical importance, more particularly for men, but also for women. A person's status in his clan, and in every segment of it to which he belongs, depends largely on whether 'his father is alive (*u ba bɛ*)' or not (*u ba ka*). It is correlated with the distribution of jural and ritual authority and responsibility in the lineage. During his own father's lifetime a person's status is submerged in that of his father for jural and ritual purposes. He comes directly under his father's authority, as we shall see presently. He attains his first degree of independence only on the death of his own father. This is shown to some extent in every department of his life, but most significantly in the sphere of ritual. A man cannot make sacrifices to his patrilineal ancestors in his own right while his own father is alive. His father does this on his behalf. It is only when his father dies that a man can sacrifice directly to his ancestors; for such sacrifices can only be offered through the medium of his father's spirit.

This marks a very important stage in a man's social maturation, whatever his chronological age may be. Henceforth the responsibility for keeping the goodwill of his ancestors rests directly on his own shoulders. It will be he himself, for instance, not his father, who decides whether a sacrifice demanded by such-and-such an ancestor should be offered at once or postponed. And with this first stage of ritual responsibility usually goes some degree of autonomy in jural and economic matters, as we shall see presently. Nevertheless, no man attains full autonomy within the limits of the lineage system until he is altogether 'fatherless'. While he has a proxy or classificatory father alive he is still to some extent under paternal authority. It is worth

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considering this situation more closely as it will give us a further insight into the working of the classificatory principle.

The simplest and clearest index to it is in certain observances at the funeral of any man of one's father's generation. A man whose 'father' is alive may not perform the principal rites such as the killing of the goat or sheep from which the loin-cover for the corpse will be cut, or the rites of 'entering the *zɔŋ*'; and he may not eat the ceremonial food associated with or consumed in these rites. To infringe these taboos is not only an insult to one's 'father' but a sin, since it is equivalent to wishing him dead. There are men whose proxy or classificatory fathers are alive who know more about ritual matters than their seniors. I have seen such men stand by and direct others in the performance of funeral rites which they themselves are forbidden to carry out. I have seen them raging with exasperation at the incompetence of the old men or women who were carrying out the rites; but they would have been shocked at the suggestion that it would save temper and trouble if they performed the rites themselves.

Again, the application of the notion varies relatively to the dimensions of the lineage involved in a particular situation and the whole constellation of classificatory kinship recognized within it. At one extreme stand matters that concern only the members of the nuclear lineage. That would be the case, for example, if the nuclear lineage assembled to make a sacrifice to its immediate founding ancestor. Thus, to take a lineage we have met in an earlier chapter, if Katiŋoo biis meet to sacrifice to Katiŋoo, only his grandsons and great-grandsons are concerned (see genealogy on p. 68). In such a situation the two patri-segments of Katiŋoo biis (Duun biis and Baa biis) are each formally recognized as a separate unit and the sacrificial meat is divided equally between them. If Ɔmara were dead, the share due to his patri-segment would fall to his sons; and they would, in this context, say that they have no father. They are, in fact, through the eldest son, taking the place of their father in intra-lineage relations; their status is no longer submerged in that of their father. They are thinking in terms of the contraposition of the two component patri-segments of the lineage. Within the limits of the nuclear lineage, the term 'father' (*ba*) means own father and a man whose own father is dead has no father. He speaks of his proxy-fathers (father's brothers and cousins) as his *ba-pirib*, junior fathers, or *ba-biernam*, senior fathers.

The higher the segmentary order of the lineage involved, the wider is the application of this notion. If the situation involves the inner lineage, then the nuclear lineage emerges as the smallest corporate unit recognized. This happens in sacrifices to the founding ancestor of the inner lineage or in certain funeral customs where food contributions are made by the head of the nuclear lineage on behalf of the whole unit. In this case a man whose own father is dead but whose father's brother

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or father's father's brother's son is still alive would not claim to be fatherless. For, in matters where the nuclear lineage acts as a unit in relation to other like units, he has no independent status. The unit is under the authority of a 'father' and a 'son's' status is submerged in the 'father's'. Similarly, if the lineage involved is a medial lineage, the smallest sub-segments recognized will be its component inner lineages. Then a man will only claim to be fatherless if he has no 'father' alive within the inner lineage to which he belongs. Beyond this range—for example where the unit of corporate action is a maximal lineage in which the smallest sub-segments recognized are the medial lineages—the question usually does not arise. At this range generation differences no longer count.

This is a schematic formulation, for there is always a margin of flexibility depending both on the internal structure of the unit concerned and on such adventitious factors as the personal relations of the men who are involved and the character of the situation. Continuity of person-to-person relationships in the routine affairs of the lineage and family help to keep appropriate kinship distances alive. A describes B as his 'father' because he knows that his natural father C during his lifetime always spoke of B as his 'brother'. But human memory is fallible, and in doubtful cases Tallensi take the line of greatest personal advantage consonant with existing structural arrangements.

We shall understand it better if we consider a few examples of how the notion of being fatherless influences behaviour in practice. At Soog one of the component maximal lineages of the clan comprises two major segments which function as medial lineages in corporate affairs. Each of these segments is represented by its head at ceremonies at the External *Bɔɣar* of Soog. When Sɛbɔg, the head of one of these segments, died, the most senior remaining member of the unit was his 18-year-old son, Bɔɣabil, who therefore succeeded to the headship of the segment. Shortly after Sɛbɔg's death an important sacrifice was performed at the External *Bɔɣar*. The beer used for the preliminary libations was being shared among the elders and a calabashful was passed to Bɔɣabil. The youth shook his head in refusal. 'No, drink,' said one of the elders, 'it is a taboo. You are an elder now, not a child.' Up till then Bɔɣabil had been prohibited from drinking this beer, as no one who has a father alive may drink of it.

Another incident on this same occasion was equally revealing. Certain of the fowls slaughtered in sacrifices to an External *Bɔɣar* are known as 'tabooed fowls (*nɔkiha*)'. They may not be touched, let alone eaten, by anyone who has a father alive. A man inadvertently handed one of these birds to Diŋkaha's son. Noticing this, Diŋkaha burst into a tirade against the man. 'Do you wish to cause my death or my son's death?' he cried.

In both these instances to be fatherless meant to have no natural

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father or proxy father alive. But let us take a more complicated as well as more commonplace case.

Ziŋgan biis form an inner lineage, one of the five inner lineages that together constitute the medial lineage of Bɔyayiedɔt yiri of Tɔŋ-Guŋ. The genealogy overleaf shows the agnatic relationships of the members of Ziŋgan biis we are concerned with here.

The head of the whole inner lineage is Kutɔbis. He is also the head of one major segment of the lineage, Pa'anbɔbis biis; the head of the other major segment, Zaɣahna'am biis, is Ɔndieso. Within his own segment of Ziŋgan biis Ɔndieso is master. He farms for himself; he sacrifices directly to his own father's and ancestors' spirits; he owns his sisters' bride-price cattle and can dispose of them as he pleases and is responsible for finding the bride-price for his own wives or his sons' wives. In these matters that concern his nuclear lineage primarily he does not acknowledge Kutɔbis as his 'father'. He looks upon Kutɔbis as only the head of the inner lineage. As such, he must be formally consulted by Ɔndieso in matters that involve jural or ritual relationships with other lineages or clans, such as arise through marriage. Thus, if Ɔndieso's daughter is sought in marriage, it is Kutɔbis who receives the emissary with the placation gifts from the bridegroom and keeps the fowl he brings, thus signifying his formal assent and regularizing the marriage. Nevertheless, it is a purely nominal authority that Kutɔbis exercises. The real decisions rest with Ɔndieso. Again, if Ɔndieso seduces the wife of, say, a Gbeog man, the injured man's lineage head will protest to Kutɔbis and negotiations for the reconciliation rites will be carried out by the latter. He will accept nominal responsibility for Ɔndieso in this matter and will take charge of the arrangements that concern Ziŋgan biis in the reconciliation rites. But the animals required for the rites must be supplied by Ɔndieso himself. To give a third example, Kutɔbis will be summoned at once if there is a death in Ɔndieso's family and will preside over the mortuary and funeral ceremonies. But, again, the animals and foodstuffs that have to be provided by the 'owner of the funeral'—the person actually responsible for its performance—must be supplied by Ɔndieso. Kutɔbis has, in fact, no power directly to order Ɔndieso to do anything; he has no claims, as of right, on Ɔndieso's services or material help; he has no responsibility for Ɔndieso's welfare, apart from the general moral responsibility he has for the welfare of the whole lineage. As the natives say, he 'owns' Ɔndieso 'with the mouth only (*nuoni maa*)'. All this is implied when Ɔndieso says: 'If it is a question of the (inner) lineage only, I have no father (*la a dug pooni maa, nka ba*).' Kutɔbis's relations with him arise from the fact that Kutɔbis is *dug kpeem*, head of the inner lineage, custodian of the founding ancestor's *bɔŋar* and of the lineage *zanɔr*. If he were Ɔndieso's classificatory 'brother' or 'grandfather', it would make no difference to their relations. The symbolic expression

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613 428 Kutəbis also inherited the lineage *bɔŋar* of Pa'anbəbis biis, of which nuclear lineage he and his sons and brother's sons form a segment. Again, this might have gone to the head of the other segment of Pa'anbəbis biis if he had been senior by generation or age to Kutəbis. With this *bɔŋar* goes some land at the now abandoned site of Pa'anbəbis's homestead. If on Kutəbis's death the present head of Baŋanlərəg biis, Na'abzə, is still alive it will come to him.

Kutəbis also inherited the ancestral shrines of his immediate forebears Baŋana, Pa'ana, and Səmnam. With these shrines go several strips of land, especially the large home farm (*saman*) adjoining the homestead, which are the patrimonial property of Səmnam's line of descent. On Kutəbis's death they will be inherited by his younger 'brother' Pa'anbəbis II. Lastly, Kutəbis inherited some land which had been allocated to his father Baŋana as a private plot and thereafter became the patrimonial property of Baŋana's descendants.

He also assumed paternal rights over Yidaan's children. As Yidaan's sons farm independently of him, he cannot command their labour, though they are bound to assist him if he is hard-pressed and asks them to do so. In theory Kutəbis has the unrestricted right to dispose of his late brother's daughters in marriage, and to use the bride-price paid for any of them as he pleases. Actually, he would not marry off any of the girls without consulting Yidaan's oldest son, Da'amo'o, and would, as we have seen, hand over the bride-price to Da'amo'o. He retains the right, however, to draw on the bride-price of any of Yidaan's daughters in a difficulty calling for payments he cannot meet. We have quoted an instance of this on p. 155. Kutəbis also nominally inherited what was left of the livestock and clothes Yidaan had amassed,[1] but handed them over to Da'amo'o, retaining only the right to use them in an emergency. As regards Yidaan's widows, the older woman chose to stay on with Da'amo'o, as she was past the age of child-bearing. The younger accepted Kutəbis as she had a child at the breast. But it was confidently said, by members of the lineage, that she would probably leave him when her child was old enough for her to have another.

Parallel Significance of 'Not having a Mother alive'

613 ●593 784 601 On the principle that both parents have an equally indispensable part in the procreation and upbringing of children, whether or not one has a mother alive is also socially recognized. There is a general taboo binding on everybody who has a mother alive. They may not drink water out of an earthenware dish (*laa*); they must always use a calabash (*ŋmaa*), the normal drinking vessel. This is connected with the ritual use of earthenware dishes as food and drinking-vessels in the purification of

[1] This was because Kutəbis and Yidaan were *saarɔt*, full brothers. As we shall see later, full brothers have a very great degree of social equivalence and are entitled to inherit one another's personal effects in a way that half-brothers are not.

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orphans at funerals. The ritual prohibitions falling on 'those who have a father alive', at funerals of old men, also fall on 'those who have a mother alive', at funerals of old women. But owing to the lesser importance of maternal than of agnatic descent in determining social status, whether or not one has a mother alive is of less social importance than whether one has or lacks a 'father'. The range within which classificatory 'mothers' are socially recognized is the same as for 'fathers', since 'mothers' derive their status from their husbands. But it is only the wives of 'fathers' belonging to one's own nuclear lineage who receive the deference due to a 'mother'. Beyond that range it is a voluntary matter whether or not one treats a 'father's' wife with the respect due to a 'mother'. Putting this in another way, a proxy mother is usually one's own mother's co-wife within the limits of, at most, the expanded family, who might or actually did take one's mother's place in bringing one up. It is this which distinguishes a 'mother' who is a 'father's wife' from one's natural mother's uterine sisters and kinswomen, who are also called 'mothers'. In one matter only is the recognition as classificatory 'mothers' of the wives of all 'fathers' of the inner lineage strictly enforced, and that is in regard to incest. This is of special importance when it comes to the inheritance of widows.

To take an example again from Ziŋgan biis, Da'amo'o and Ɔndieso both call Kutɔbis's wives their 'mothers'. They would not be able to marry any of them if Kutɔbis were to die. But if one of the wives dies, Da'amo'o, having lost his own mother, is obliged to go through the rites of mourning as for a mother. Ɔndieso will not. He may have his head shaven as a sign of mourning for her if she was particularly friendly with his family, or was particularly helpful to him, say by taking care of his wife during a difficult confinement. But this would be a voluntary gesture of respect, not a ritual obligation. If they are both present at a funeral of an old woman who is not married into their inner lineage, Da'amo'o will refrain, out of respect for his proxy mothers, from taking part in the rites forbidden to 'those who have mothers alive'. Ɔndieso will not, unless he wants to make a special gesture of respect to Kutɔbis or his wives. The personal relationships of the people concerned are irrelevant within the nuclear lineage. Da'amo'o, in fact, heartily dislikes Kutɔbis's senior wife and has a strong affection for Ɔndieso's proxy mother and his (Da'amo'o's) classificatory mother, Yiŋduuŋ, who is living with Ɔndieso. But he cannot escape the mourning rites he must undergo if the former dies, and is not obliged to undergo these rites if the latter dies.

The difference in the conventional attitudes towards a proxy mother and a proxy father is also shown in the way Tallensi look at the duty of supporting an aged parent, a subject we shall consider further in Chapter VII.

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CHAPTER VI

THE MORAL BASIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF PARENT AND CHILD

The Fundamental Axiom of Parenthood

593 BEFORE we try to unravel further the complex strands that unite parents and children we must elucidate an idea which the Tallensi put forward as the fundamental axiom of parenthood. We have mentioned it already in our analysis of the notion of descent, but we have to examine it now from the point of view of the person-to-person relations of parents and children. It is the axiom, clearly stated by the natives and apparent also in Tale values and usages, that the fact of having begotten or borne a child creates an absolute moral bond between it and its parents. This idea is felt by them to be the real ultimate sanction behind right conduct in the relations of parents and children; and there is a very close agreement between ideals and actualities in this province of Tale social life.

593 888 855 Ignorance of hygiene and medicine, insufficiency of food and clothing, magical ideas, and Tale cultural standards in matters such as cleanliness or ventilation are undoubted handicaps to the child in its struggle to grow up. But sheer, callous neglect of a child by its parents, such as we sometimes hear of in more civilized societies, would be regarded with horror by all Tallensi and is unheard of. Similarly, a person who abandoned an aged parent to destitution would be regarded as a good for nothing (*boŋwaari*). It happens occasionally, nowadays, when young men who find life irksome at home can so easily sneak off to foreign parts and stay away for many years. But it is a very rare thing and is universally reviled.

The Tribulations of Parenthood

593 If one asks a native why parents are and should be devoted to their children; or on what grounds they claim to 'own' (*so*) their children and to be entitled to their services, affection, gratitude, and respect; if one asks a girl who is keeping sullenly indoors, because she has been forcibly recovered from the lover she eloped with and beaten into the bargain, why she submitted passively to her father; or if one asks a young man nursing a bitter grievance against a father who has stopped him from marrying the girl he was courting why he does not defy the old man; if one asks any Talən, man or woman, such questions as these the answer invariably is, 'It is *dɔŋam*'. 'Have you not begotten (or borne) them?' 'Has he not begotten you?' And then, almost always, comes the afterthought which contains the crux of the explanation, '*Dɔŋam pu tɔ?*—Is not begetting (bearing) hard?' The phrase sounds

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trite, especially after one has heard it fifty times. But it is charged with deep emotion for the native to whom it stands for all the tribulations and anxieties connected with the whole task of bringing up a child.

Men say that these tribulations begin with the act of sex itself. Desired though it is for the pleasure it gives, sexual intercourse is debilitating. Ejaculation (*duun duurəm*, a term primarily used for micturition) is a giving up of something vital that is a source of strength and youth. That is why young, unmarried men are so much more vigorous than married men.

Then there is the strain under which a man lives during his wife's pregnancy, particularly if it is a first pregnancy. Pregnancy, the creation of life, must not be brought into contact with death. Hence he, as the father of his wife's coming child, must not take direct part in mortuary or funeral rites. If he is one of the bereaved, the rites he is compelled to undergo are modified so as to eliminate contact with the corpse or objects symbolizing it. No particular evil is thought to follow on a breach of this taboo, which can, in fact, be magically purged if circumstances compel a man to it. But no man would be so callous as to flout the taboo deliberately.

Again, a man must not cut a new bush farm while his wife is pregnant, lest she miscarry. Both are critical events, affectively as well as socially, involving economic readjustments and the assumption of new responsibilities. Preparing a new bush farm absorbs you completely; it is, the natives say, 'a commotion of the heart (*suhkpɛlɔg*)'. But when your wife is pregnant you 'take heed only of her pregnancy (*i wona u puur la*)'. You cannot give attention, at the same time, to a new and vital economic enterprise like cutting a new bush farm. Apart from a wife's pregnancy only two other critical happenings are so obsessing as to be considered mystically incompatible with making a new bush farm—building a new house, a momentous undertaking, both materially and ritually, which marks an important change in a man's social personality; and taking a new wife, which also involves or portends big readjustments in one's social relations. It is significant that a man who is cutting a new bush farm or building a new house keeps away from funerals outside his own inner lineage since they are both emotionally disturbing and a distraction. All these critical events demand watchfulness and solicitude, for unknown dangers of both a physical and a mystical kind threaten their outcome. A man has to go about consulting diviners. He offers special sacrifices to his ancestors and puts the matter in their particular care.

Another sign of the concern that tempers a man's joy at his wife's pregnancy is the caution he must use in the chase. He must not kill certain mystically dangerous animals, else his wife may miscarry or bear a deformed child.

A man's close relatives are also concerned when his wife is pregnant, especially if it is a first pregnancy. His mother and the older women of

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the child falls largely on the other women of the household, though the wives of neighbours belonging to the same expanded family, if they are near, might give some help too.[1] The younger women fetch water and cook for her. One of the experienced old women, her mother-in-law or the wife of a neighbour, usually of one of her husband's fellow members of the same inner lineage, supervises and sees to such matters as the bathing of mother and child and the ritual emergence from seclusion of the mother. When she is getting about again, her mother-in-law or senior co-wives must keep a watch over her to see that she does not over-exert herself or go any distance unaccompanied. For as we have mentioned earlier, a woman after childbirth is nervous and may be driven mad by evil trees and stones if she is alone far from home.

These are some of the things a man thinks of when he says that begetting or bearing a child is hard; but they are only the beginning of a father's tribulations. Talking with men immediately after the birth of a child to them, one feels a secret anxiety behind their obvious joy. Many children die in infancy,[2] the Tallensi say, and how can a man know if this particular child will survive? During the first few months of life a child is extremely vulnerable, both physically and mystically. Medicine to keep out evil trees and stones is carefully daubed over the gateway and over every orifice in the homestead wall, and in a circle round the spot where the child lies. *Nɔya teem* ('mouth medicine'), to protect it against malicious praise is given to it. Lucky omens, whether of a conventional or an unconventional kind, are noted. Then, some days after its birth, the child's father or the head of the joint family visits a diviner to find out which of the lineage ancestors is taking it as a spiritual ward (*sɪyɔraan*) to guard its life (*gur u yɔvɔr*) and watch over its growth. Only after two to six months from the day of its birth is the child at length allowed out of doors; and then it must be ritually carried out, for the first time, by a clanswoman (*pɔyayabɔlɔg*) of the father's clan (i.e. by a 'female father', *bapɔk*, of the child) chosen by divination, so that the ancestors may bless this important step in its development. And this is not the end of the story, for a father's responsibilities for his children never come to an end, as we shall see presently.

[1] Among the Tallensi, as among many patrilineal peoples, the parturient woman's sisters do not assist at the birth of the child. For, as the natives say, it is not their child. The responsibility of assisting at the birth falls on the wives of the lineage to which the child belongs—women who will later be recognized as its proxy and classificatory mothers. It is one of these women, too, who suckles the child for the first two or three days until the mother's milk begins to flow properly. A parturient woman's mother and sisters bring her gifts of foodstuffs and firewood; and her father also sends her a gift of foodstuffs, guinea-fowls, salt, and other condiments, according to his means. They have nothing to do with the care of mother and child during and after the confinement.

[2] Infant mortality is high—probably about 150–200 per 1,000. Cf. my paper 'A Note on Fertility among the Tallensi of the Gold Coast', *Sociological Review*, vol. xxxv, nos. 3 and 4, 1943.

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water lowered. Tallensi think it is essential for the health of the mother and babe, and one important item in it is forcing some of the decoction down the babe's throat. Whether or not it actually has a cleansing or invigorating effect must be left to medical judgement. For the native women it has the double significance of an ordeal, and a prescribed treatment that they would not dream of neglecting.

As we have seen, the care of the child on the ritual side falls on its father. The much more exacting physical care of the child in its parlous passage through infancy is its mother's responsibility. This is stressed when Tallensi insist that it is not on account of a magical taboo but because a child is still partly dependent on the breast until it is about three, that sexual intercourse between a man and his nursing wife is discontinued. They say that a child requires the undivided care of its mother until it can run about and eat solid food by itself, and that it will wilt away through lack of nourishment if she conceives prematurely. Nursing mothers become pregnant only too often through lack of self-control, but this is never condoned by public opinion. The only time a Tale woman tries to induce an abortion is when such an accident happens, for no sacrifice is too great to preserve her living child.

When Tale parents are asked what were the special difficulties they had to overcome in rearing their children, they always mention sickness first. Mothers especially have a great dread of sickness in their children. One does not notice this in the easy-going, placid atmosphere of a well-conducted family when there is no 'sleeplessness' (*gogingara*), to use the apt native euphemism for sickness. But one sees it when a child gets ill. Minor ailments throw its mother into a state of anxiety. Serious illness puts her into a panic or prostrates her with grief. She refuses food—which is always regarded by the natives as a sign of severe illness or great emotional distress—and stops all her work. I have seen illness in adolescent or adult children have this effect on women; and the younger the child the more do they suffer.

It is easy to imagine what the death of a child in infancy or childhood means to its mother. A man is expected to control his emotions, but a woman may express her grief freely. A father's grief is palliated, also, by the active role he takes in the ritual by which the emotional shock is neutralized. A woman's part in this ritual is more passive and she feels the blow more acutely in consequence. A mother remains inconsolable for many days and even weeks over the loss of a child.

The way Tallensi think of a mother's grief over the death of her child was brought home to me when Dinkaha's little girl of about three died after a lingering and horrible illness. He had been devoted to the child and was greatly distressed, but in a few days he had accepted the diviner's verdict philosophically and was his old bouncing self again. His wife, on the other hand, broke down completely. Then, a couple of weeks later, news came that an older child of hers by a former husband, with

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761 whom it was living, had also died suddenly. Diŋkaha, greatly concerned for his wife, warned all the members of his family not to say anything
●593 to her about it. If she heard of this calamity now, he said, she would surely die. Later on, when she had settled down again he would himself break the news to her.

765 Incidentally, fathers do not always get over the death of a child, whether an infant or an adult, with ease. It is easier for a young man,
593 the Tallensi say, because he thinks to himself that his wife can still bear children to him. But even young men have been known to abandon
[762] themselves to despair. An extreme case was that of Dəyayam, who pierced himself with a poisoned arrow when his favourite child died; and the average Talən, it must be remembered, speaks of suicide with contempt. The grief of a father when a grown-up or adolescent son dies is very moving. When Pumaan's son Kpeemi and Tinta'alam's son Suor, both fine young men in the twenties, died, it was as if a shock ran through the whole community. On both occasions the men of the clan gathered in full force to mourn at the bereaved house and the atmosphere of tragedy was felt by all. I cannot forget the picture of Pumaan, as taciturn and dour a man as one could meet anywhere, holding himself tautly, his face ashen, his eyes staring ahead, stoically suppressing his despair as an elder should do. Tɛndaan Teroog, an old man over seventy, made no pretence of stoicism when his eldest and only adult son died leaving a number of wives and children. He simply pined away and followed his son to the grave in a couple of months.

593 When Tallensi say that it is hard to bring a child into the world, they
769 have in mind more than the physiological facts of birth, and the dangers of infancy and childhood. They think of the whole gamut of social and emotional relations between parents and children arising out of the fact of birth. For a Talən, as we have seen, does not become altogether independent of his parents until their death—nor, indeed, even after their death. The pragmatic bonds of jural and economic dependence become transformed into the equally strong, nay stronger bonds of ritual dependence on the ancestor spirits of whom the parents are the immediate prototypes and intermediaries. And in many ways the ritual relationships of the Tallensi with the spirits of their parents give a truer insight into the parent–child bond than their visible behaviour towards one another. 'Fear the dead but do not fear the living (*Zom kpiim ka di zo vopa*)', says one of their proverbs which enshrines their feeling that a person is under a far more compelling bond with his parents when they are dead than during their life. We shall return to this presently.

593 The gist of our analysis is that to the Tallensi parenthood means responsibility that weighs heavily at times. This comes out both in the notion that bearing or begetting a child is hard and in the correlated notion of the importance of rearing. At the same time there is no native, man or woman, who would not insist that a person has lived in vain if he

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dies childless, and that children are the greatest source of joy and pride, comfort and support that anybody can have. The Tallensi are much like ourselves in this matter and do not think there is any inconsistency between these two aspects of parenthood. Their whole philosophy of life is like that. Realists as they are, they take it for granted that life has many risks and troubles, but, as they often put it, 'Does anybody desire death on that account?' When I told them that Europeans often refrain deliberately from having children, they were either sceptical or appalled.

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The Parent–Child Bond as an Absolute Bond

Tallensi say that the bonds between parent and child can never be obliterated and may not be repudiated. This is a fundamental moral principle and it goes back to the notion that bearing or begetting children is hard. From it follows the duty of filial piety.

You cannot disown your child. 'Even if your child is a good-for-nothing, you have no alternative but to keep him,' said Loyani, one of the most intelligent and upright men I knew. 'Have you not suffered to beget him?' he went on. 'How can you reject him? You are always thinking of your children's good, though they are often selfish and think only of their own advantage. Your child may be lazy or ill-behaved. But yet you cannot drive him away, you cannot harass him so that he quits you.'

Many examples could be quoted to illustrate the strength of this ideal. I sacked one of my servants for petty theft. A day or two later an elder who was known to be one of my friends came to intercede for him. He admitted that the man was a thief, but he was very disappointed when I declined to take him back. 'You are his father,' he said, 'and you ought to take him back.' Then, after a short silence, he added gravely, 'You white men! You are not like us. You do not understand the meaning of "to beg forgiveness".'

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A better instance is an incident in which Loyani himself was concerned some days after he made the comment quoted above. A youth of Loyani's clan stole a fowl owned by another member of his own joint family, whom he called his older brother (*bier*). The theft, a despicable thing in any case, was made blacker by the youth's attempt to conceal it; and when it was discovered, the whole clan was agog with it. The culprit's father, in his shame and anger at the disgrace brought upon his family, struck and cursed him saying that he must never again set foot in the house. Thereupon the young man took refuge with Loyani, whose son was his friend. Loyani himself, like all respectable people, was shocked at the theft. 'Heaven save me from theft,' he said, when he told me the story. 'Death were better than that. It is shameful.' And he went on to describe how everybody scorns and derides a thief. Nevertheless, as soon as the boy arrived Loyani went to the elders of the boy's lineage to get them to intercede with the father to withdraw his

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593 685 curse and take his son back. But meanwhile the boy sneaked away and went to his brother in Mampurugu for fear of public ridicule. 'But', said Loɣani, 'one day he will return and his father will certainly take him back.' It is because a man cannot disown his child that a Tale father always stands by his son in what the natives call *pɔɣadir ɣila*, marriage affairs, the test occasions of jural responsibility. A man may have strong private objections to his son's marriage and eventually cause it to be dissolved. He may criticize and scold his son for it. But in public he will support the boy if the marriage does not infringe some rule of kinship or convention of social relationships. This, it should be noted, is not the same thing as a man's responsibility for his son's bride-price which rests on a different principle. For the same reason a woman can never be denied refuge in her father's house if she has nowhere else to stay.

593 A woman, too, cannot disown her child. Indeed Tallensi say that it is unthinkable for a woman, bound as she is to her child by even stronger emotional bonds than a man. It happens, of course, that women desert, or are taken away from one husband to marry another and leave a child behind. But if the child is still too tiny to fend for itself it accompanies its mother until it is old enough to be separated (*pɔhəg*) from her. Tallensi are very critical of a woman who deserts a child when she leaves its father, though not without ulterior motives; for a runaway wife is a loss, whether she leaves children or not. As has been mentioned, they say that in such cases 'Rearing is more important than bearing'. And yet, they say, a woman yearns after her child no matter who has the custody of it. She might easily desert a later husband to return to an earlier husband with whom she has left a child; and if a woman who has been married more than once returns to her first husband, his rights take precedence of all the others' by Tale custom. That is why men object strongly to a wife's attempting to visit or even see a child she has left with a former husband. I have seen a man keep watch on his wife for days lest she make such an attempt. 'Do you know what bearing (a child) means to a woman?' he said, in explanation. In any case, her marital history makes no difference to the *soog* (uterine) tie between a woman and her child and to the social relationships arising out of it. As we have already learnt, there is no surer guarantee that a woman will [837] stay with a husband than if she has two or three children by him. If she has children, a woman who commits adultery almost invariably returns to her husband, risking the wrath of his ancestor spirits and enduring the shame of a semi-public confession. If she has none, she usually runs off with her paramour.

593 577 The ideas we have been discussing are not thought to have a ritual sanction where own parents and children are concerned. But with proxy parents, as might be expected, a ritual sanction comes into the picture openly. A man who disowns or ill-treats or in other ways neglects the

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duties of a 'father' to a dead brother's children, especially minor children, incurs the anger of his paternal ancestors. Human nature being what it is, Tallensi say, it happens all too often that men behave disgracefully to a dead brother's children. Sometimes retribution comes in their lifetime. Sometimes, however, the sanction which re-establishes the moral law only comes into action after their death. Then the diviners who are consulted declare that they have not been 'accepted' (*die*) by the ancestors whom they have gone to join. Their own sons must make ritual amends to set the matter right, and so the moral principles they sinned against are vindicated.

Filial Piety

The counterpart of parental duty and devotion is filial piety. It is regarded by the Tallensi as an equally binding moral principle and an equally strong motive of individual conduct; and they trace it back, also, to the tribulations parents undergo in bringing a child into the world. It is not a formally elaborated doctrine, as among the Chinese, nor a dogma of faith, as among the ancient Hebrews, nor a legal principle, as in ancient Rome, but a diffused norm of conduct. The Tallensi would laugh at the idea of kowtowing to a parent, and their respect for parental authority is far from being blind obedience. For one of the significant characteristics of the relations of parents and children is their ambivalence. In everyday intercourse there is a freedom in these relations, verging on camaraderie. Yet they are full of tensions due to the self-assertion of children against their parents. It is the characteristic picture of the relations between successive generations in a patrilineal society—parents and children bound to one another by the strongest ties of sentiment and interest but latently pitted against one another, particularly in the case of fathers and sons. Filial piety among the Tallensi can be interpreted, in some of its expressions, as a bulwark against the disintegrative effects of these tensions or as a stabilizing mechanism of behaviour the main function of which is to close the gap between parents and children if it threatens to become too large.

We have seen how important it is for a man's status whether or not he has a father alive. If anything, his status is advanced by the death of his nearest fathers, and it is not until he is 'fatherless' within the nuclear lineage that he attains jural autonomy. In this, as in all aspects of the relations of father and son, Tale custom is ambivalent. After a certain stage of social maturity men desire to be free of paternal restraint, and yet they are glad to leave the bigger responsibilities for their lives in the hands of a father. It is not surprising that the affective stress, in Tale thought, is on the blessings of having a father alive.

Speaking conventionally, Tallensi say that one must obey one's father, respect him, work for him, take his side against everybody else—even

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against one's mother—'*ɔn dɔyi la zugu*—because he begot you'. One's dependence on him increases one's attachment and sense of duty towards him. Dependence on one's father is a good thing, a highly desirable and advantageous state of affairs, and the essence of filial piety is to accept this condition of dependence as the right thing in life. Tallensi say that a man has no cares while his father is alive. He looks after all one's affairs (*maal i yɛla*). He takes charge of the farming, attends to all ritual matters such as sacrifices to the ancestors and the consultation of diviners if one is ill, and assumes responsibility for such things as the payment of bride-price. He takes care of the house (*gur yiri*) both in the physical sense of always staying at home and in the jural and ritual sense of being its responsible head, leaving his sons free to go about as they please. The emphasis is on the father as the one who bears all responsibility for one's welfare in economic, jural, and ritual matters. That is why, the natives say, a man mourns the death of a father, for henceforth he must take on the burden of responsibility for himself. It means the end of protection and security in relation to society at large and to the spirits of the ancestors.

The picture is overdrawn but not inaccurate. The burden of social responsibility does not weigh so heavily as this statement implies. Siŋ and Gbana, both young men in the twenties, managed their households very well. But both often bemoaned their fate in having been left fatherless when still boys. 'If my father were alive I would have had a wife by now', said Siŋ, 'and Na'abzɔ (his proxy father) would not have used my sister's bride-price cattle for his own purposes.' The death of the father often means the uprooting of his sons. 'Now', said Kɛlibɔ after his father's funeral ceremonies were over, 'we (he and his brothers) shall become poor men. When our father was alive we had a large home farm to cultivate. Now our junior father (*ba-pit*) will take that and we shall have to go and farm our bush farms. Soon the day will come when we shall move out, for who knows how a *ba-pit* will look after you?' I have heard boys of 9 or 10 talk in this way after the death of their father. It is easier for a woman who has her husband's protection. But even she suffers a sad loss in the death of her own father. His heirs, even her own brothers, will never have quite the same intimate and personal interest in her and her children.

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There is a direct connexion between this emphasis on the dependence of children on parents and the worship of the ancestors. Nor is the underlying feeling of a hidden antagonism between father and son, of which we shall have more to say presently, altogether incongruous with this overt stress on the security the father symbolizes. The social relations of father and son, at every stage of the latter's development, are always a compromise between the mutual dependence of father and son and the limited dependence enjoyed by the latter.

There is not the same degree of tension between mother and child or

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even mother and daughter, and hence, perhaps, Tallensi do not have such a definite conventional rationalization of their attitudes towards the mother. They say you respect your mother and cherish her in old age because she bore and fed you. In childhood you were more attached to her than to your father; you ran to her whenever you were tired or hungry or ill and she comforted and fed you; as an adult you realize the importance of 'father's begetting' (*ba-dɔŋam*) in jural, ritual, and economic matters such as marriage or landowning, and in crises like sickness or death; but your mother is still honoured as the centre of your domestic arrangements if you are a man, and if you are a woman, she is the one person you can always come to in sickness or trouble, in the certainty of loving attention. Comfort, emotional security, and food—these are the distinguishing qualities of a mother in Tale thought. It corresponds to the more personal character of the bonds between mother and child, by contrast with the jurally and ritually weighted ties with the father.

Tallensi say that one must respect one's living parents; but to one's dead parents one owes reverence and submission in surpassing degree. That is what the proverb 'Fear the dead and do not fear the living' means to them.[1] One can defy a living parent sometimes and rely on being forgiven; one cannot defy a dead parent. One can live without the help of a living parent, if necessary, but not without the mystical protection of one's dead parents.

In the religious practice of the Tallensi the ancestors exercise their powers without compunction. They punish and slay as arbitrarily as they bless. Every dry season men return to rebuild their parental homes which have been allowed to lie in decay for many years. They come from Mampurugu, from outlying parts of Taleland, or from Ashanti and the Colony. Some have been away for years. Pal of Zubiuŋ had a prosperous farm in Mampurugu, where he had gone to settle on being discharged from the regiment after the war of 1914–18. During his fifteen years in Mampurugu he had become fairly wealthy, with five wives, a horse, several head of cattle, and a quantity of good clothes. Dema of Tenzugu, who joined the regiment as far back as 1912 and had lived in Ashanti as a trader since his discharge after the war, was obviously a man of considerable wealth by Tale standards. Both returned to rebuild their fathers' homesteads in 1935–6. They told the same story. Wives and children had died; there had been repeated bouts of sickness in the family; other misfortunes had piled up over the years; and all, as the diviners declared, because they had 'rejected (*zaŋah*) their fathers (*banam*)' by remaining in foreign parts. It did not matter much while there were older brothers at home to 'give water (*zaŋ kuom ti*)', that is, make sacrifices, to the ancestral shrines. But

[1] The verb *zo*, to fear, has a wide range of meaning and here it means to show respect towards, to revere, to stand in awe of.

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when they were left as heads of their lineage segments they had to come home. Their fathers' spirits would have killed them if they had not done so. Dema is frankly happy to be home again amongst his own people after his wanderings. Pal, who is dependent on farming for his living, still speaks with a tinge of regret of the fine farm he had to abandon in Mampurugu. But he feels that he had no option, and there is even an element of pride in his submission to the *force majeure* of his dead father, since he is now the head of his lineage segment. It was the same with Na'abzɔ, Kayar, Yinworəb, Bangam-Teroog, and many others, too numerous to mention, who returned home after years abroad in order to 'give water' to their fathers.

While the whole ancestor cult is an elaborate expression of filial piety towards the dead parents, one of the commonest ways in which the observer comes across it is in the practice of leechcraft. Almost every native owns some 'roots (*ŋaɣa*)' for the treatment of sickness, and the therapeutic value of the roots lies not so much in their physical properties as in the fact that their owner is able, by right of ownership, to mobilize magical virtue in their support. As a preliminary to the curative rites the owner of the roots always calls upon his or her ancestors for a blessing, and this opens with the phrase 'My father, I shall call you (first). You have no concern with this matter, but I call on you (to help me) for the sake of begetting, because you begot me (*Yiba, n-na mbuola nyɛni. Nyɛn baha ka dɛni, ka mbuoli la dɔɣam la zug, nyɛn dɔɣɔm la zugu*).'

Naturally the ritual aspect of filial piety is of greater importance for a man than for a woman, considered in terms of their social personalities and with regard to the father; for he stands for the lineage and clan, with all that membership of these units implies, for the land and other patrimonial property, and for the ancestral home (*daboog*). But it is important for a woman, too, and in relation to the mother as well. A woman is the spiritual ward (*sɔɣaaŋ*) of one of her paternal forbears and remains under that ancestor's or ancestress's guardianship all her life. And it is through her father that she maintains good ritual relations with her ancestor guardian—either through sacrifices made by her father on her behalf or through the intermediation of her father's spirit when he is dead. Moreover, her father's spirit is of great importance to her children. It is significant that if a male line dies out a female survivor takes on the duty of sacrificing to the lineage shrines, which she can only approach through her father's spirit.

A man's mother's spirit is of as much importance for him as an individual as his father's. He has a shrine dedicated to her and other shrines dedicated to ancestors of hers. A mother's shrine is often the first after his *Yin* shrine to be dedicated by a man and is always felt to be more peculiarly his own than a father's shrine, which is heritable by half-brothers. A man would not return from abroad because of the demands

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of his dead mother's spirit; she is not tied to the lineage home in the same way as a father's spirit is and can be 'given water' more easily wherever the man happens to be. Nevertheless, his welfare and that of his dependants rests as much on his maintaining good relations with her spirit as with his father's spirit.

Filial piety among the Tallensi is a great deal more than a customary injunction to honour and respect one's parents. Psychologically it is a very complex sentiment. Even during their lifetime parents have quasi-mystical attributes, as we shall see more clearly when we consider the relations of parents and first-born children, and these dominate the sentiment. A parent can bless or curse a child. A parent's curse, in particular, is greatly dreaded, as we have previously noted, and, in consequence, only resorted to in case of gross affront or unforgivable defiance on the part of a child. If a parent expresses or merely feels resentment against a child, that is equivalent to a curse which may cause it illness or other harm. Thus one element in the sentiment of filial piety is respect for the blessing and fear of the curse of a parent. That is why, men say, it is sometimes embarrassing to have an old mother in one's house, though one is bound to keep her, both in duty and out of affection. For old women become completely egoistic. All they think of is having enough to eat and being comfortable, and if they are crossed they are apt to curse anybody incontinently.

In a large joint family one often finds a young man with a growing family of his own torn between his devotion to his father and his desire to be economically independent so as to provide for his wife and children more satisfactorily. He cannot go out to farm on his own without his father's blessing and consent else his venture will surely fail. He begins to drop hints or makes a tentative approach to his father. But if the latter shows displeasure he retreats at once. I have seen this happen more than once. When Tɔɣalbɛrɔgu wanted to go out to farm on his own, his father Naabdiya reproached him, saying that *he* had not deserted *his* father as Tɔɣalbɛrɔgu now wished to desert *him*. Tɔɣalbɛrɔgu apologized and withdrew. But, as Naabdiya told me, 'I still had resentment in my heart and he still secretly cherished his plan'. A couple of weeks later Tɔɣalbɛrɔgu developed a large boil in the armpit. In panic he begged an elder to ask Naabdiya to forgive him and formally withdraw his implicit curse, which, he was certain, was the cause of the boil. It was the same with Yinyɛla's son Duun. Though as an eldest son he felt entitled to start farming on his own, he dared not ask that hard old man's permission for fear that it might arouse his resentment.

It is an interesting point that when a young man who has been living and farming with his dead father's brother, for example, sets up in his own homestead, the pretext for the separation is often not an economic one. It is commonly recognized that the young man moves out because he needs more land and freedom to provide for his family by himself.

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577 But if the father's brother does not take the initiative of pointing out to his 'son' that he would be better off on his own, the latter cannot do so.
●593 It would be like suggesting that his proxy father is not treating him as fairly as his own father. The usual course of events is that something goes wrong with the young man's affairs. It may be a trivial mishap, such as a hen being caught by a hyena, or something more serious, such as the sickness of wife or child. The young man goes with his proxy father to consult a diviner; and the diviner declares that the trouble was caused by the young man's own father, because the young man has not yet built his own homestead. The dead father lets it be known that he wants to go directly to his son's own house to accept sacrifices and not have to go to his brother's house as a mere guest. Thus the dictates of filial piety are subtly and doubly fulfilled.

577 593 769 Filial piety, as these examples show, is the psychological bridge between the relations of parents and children in life and in the ritual relationships of the living with the ancestors. All the ancestors are projections of the parents, different manifestations of the images Tale culture draws of certain aspects of the parents that do not appear in conventional, overt behaviour. This is clear, also, from the element of reverence that enters into the sentiment of filial piety.

577 593 Siŋ's father and Na'abzɔ were the sons of two brothers. When Siŋ's father died, Na'abzɔ married his widow and took charge of the children. But Na'abzɔ is a notoriously cantankerous person. So Siŋ took his younger brothers and mother and set up in his own homestead as soon as he was old enough. In jural and ritual matters, however, Na'abzɔ is still his 'father'. Passing Siŋ's house one day with an elder I heard sounds of violent quarrelling between him and Na'abzɔ. Na'abzɔ stood on the flat roof of a room in his house hurling abuse at Siŋ, who replied angrily, but politely, from his gateway 50 yards away. My companion and I turned aside to talk to Siŋ. It appeared that Na'abzɔ had as usual been nagging Siŋ and his brothers unreasonably. He demanded that they should leave their own farm-work to come and hoe his farm. When Siŋ asked for his help, which was indispensable, in an important ritual matter, he had refused out of petty spite; and now he had upset Siŋ's sister's marriage by arbitrary and inconsiderate demands on her husband. I asked Siŋ, 'Why don't you take hold of Na'abzɔ and thrash him? That should stop him.' He looked at me in dismay and said, 'No, no. I couldn't do that. It is forbidden. He is my father. He begot me.' My companion, almost as shocked, chimed in, 'No, you can't strike your father, you can't strike your mother. They have borne (*dɔŋa*) you. He who strikes his father or his mother is a good-for-nothing.' He went on to say that everybody knew what sort of a person Na'abzɔ was, but Siŋ must be patient. It would all come right. For would not Na'abzɔ die one day and Siŋ inherit all his property? Similar comments were made by everybody I met about Dɛŋkumis's brother's son, Dmaarəb. The

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young man was a lazy spendthrift and there was constant trouble between the two. One day Dɛŋkumis forcibly stopped him from beating his wife and he turned and struck Dɛŋkumis. There was an uproar, for other men of the lineage set upon Dmaarəb with sticks and fists. Next day Dɛŋkumis, followed by all the men of his lineage segment, dragged the delinquent to the chief. As it was a *dugni yɛl*, an affair of the inner lineage, the chief dealt with it as head of the clan. Trembling with anger and contempt he read the youth an excoriating homily on how a person ought to behave to his parents. Dɛŋkumis, ended the chief, had been too patient with the worthless scamp just because he was his brother's son. Let him beware. Another action of this kind, and Dɛŋkumis would be commanded to throw him out of his house.

Another story deserves recording as an example of the working of filial piety. Kuŋaaŋba was born when his father was an old man. At that time a famine swept the country. A distant clansman of his father seized his mother and her babe to sell them into slavery and recoup himself for a debt owed to him by Kuŋaaŋba's father. But the woman managed to escape. When the famine was over she returned home to find her husband dead and his brother Gəlime at the head of the household. Gəlime, however, disregarding the rule that whoever inherits a man's property and status must take over his duties and liabilities, at first refused to have her back. She was like a corpse that had come to life again, he said. But his own wife, with an independence of spirit that Tale women often show, threatened to leave him if he did not take her co-wife and the child back, so he gave in. In due course Kuŋaaŋba's mother remarried one of her late husband's classificatory brothers, under whose care the boy grew up. Jurally and ritually Gəlime remained his 'father'. Then Kuŋaaŋba went to work for the white man at Kumasi. He returned with a quantity of clothes, a bag of salt, and three or four pounds in cash. He found Gəlime, now an old man in decline, left almost destitute, as his own sons, whom he had always treated with severity, had both run away to the Colony. Kuŋaaŋba at once took the old man to his own house. He gave him a cloth to wear, bought a supply of grain for him, and left him some money when he himself departed for another spell of work abroad. Thereafter Kuŋaaŋba took care of Gəlime as if he were his own father until the end of his life. 'For' said Kuŋaaŋba, as he concluded his simple tale, 'was he not my father? What did it matter that he had treated me badly in my childhood, since I am still alive and healthy? I couldn't leave my father to die of starvation just because his own sons were wastrels.' I asked Kuŋaaŋba if Gəlime had ever expressed remorse for having neglected his duty to him in his childhood. 'No,' was the answer, 'he would not do that. He would keep it to himself but his heart would be sore (*u suh ndum*). And now that he is dead he will (as a spirit) do good to me.' It was true, commented an elder who had listened to the story; a son who had

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no charity (*ɔɲ ka sugɔru*) would perhaps have done otherwise, but Kuŋaaŋba's way was the right way.

It is on the death of a parent that filial piety is most sharply evoked, just as it is the death of a child that brings out most poignantly a parent's love and devotion. We have referred to this previously. In this matter filial sentiment and ritual sanctions converge.

The supreme act of filial piety sons owe to their parents is the performance of their mortuary and funeral ceremonies. If a man or woman dies leaving no sons then this duty falls upon his or her nearest proxy sons. The initiative and chief responsibility rest with the oldest living son. The burial rites must be carried out immediately; but when and how the funeral ceremony is to be made is for the sons to decide. No one can put pressure on them to hurry on the funeral if they wish to postpone it for several years. It is customary to delay the funeral of an elder, an old woman, or a person holding a ritual office until the third year after his or her death, ostensibly so as to enable the sons to collect the large stock of grain and the livestock required for the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the case of a man the sons exercise the social role of the deceased. If he was a tendaana they will perform the duties and exercise the rights of his office, and this may be a motive for delaying his funeral beyond the customary period. The old men who are eligible for the office can object and grumble; they cannot compel a dead man's son to make his father's funeral. The issue lies between the dead man and his sons. If they delay unduly they will incur their father's anger. For until his funeral has been celebrated he dwells between the world of the living and the world of the spirits. As the Tallensi say, his one leg is in the earth (among the spirits) and his other on the surface of the earth (among the living) (*u gbɛr dɪkɔ bɛ teŋni ka gbɛr dɛna bɛ doorni*). He cannot 'join his forefathers (*paag u banam*)' until he has been 'taken back into the house (*kpeeh dugni*)' as a spirit. And the situation is the same with a dead mother, though she is of less jural importance.

The duty of burying a parent and celebrating his or her funeral is the first step in the most exacting of all filial duties, the cult of the dead parents. Native thought and behaviour show that the Tallensi feel it as an inescapable compulsion of conscience, and not as a mere act of propriety. Tallensi are quite matter-of-fact about the corpse (*kum*) of a dead parent. They describe it as the 'slough (*ʃɔrəŋ*)' of the soul (*sii*). What they are concerned about is the spirit (*kpiim*) of the dead parent. A man cannot rest secure until he has assimilated his father's or mother's spirit into the framework of his life, domesticated it, so to speak, as the expression *kpeeh dugni* shows; and this is the function of the funeral ceremony. For that reason Tallensi want to have the graves of their parents near their dwellings. True, a man's ancestor spirits accompany him wherever he goes, but they are most tangibly present in his house, where he sacrifices to them. It often happens that a man has to be

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relatives at home decide not to wait for them are the exceptions that prove the rule. In a few cases they are men who have struck root in their new environment after many years of living there and find it difficult to get away. Sometimes they find it easier to procrastinate because they originally left home through a quarrel with the deceased parent. But generally they tarry because the deceased is a proxy parent or because they have older brothers at home who will conduct the funeral. Later, perhaps, when the mantle of the lineage headship falls on their shoulders they will return, like Pal and Dema, to take over and end their lives in the ancestral home. It is a feature of Tale custom that natural human weaknesses are not unduly penalized by public opinion. As long as he lives a man can always try to make good his derelictions of filial duty. It lies between him and his ancestors. The community is neutral.

At funeral ceremonies of old people one also sees that filial piety includes pride in one's parents. The *koordaana*, owner of the funeral or chief mourner (that is, the deceased's oldest son), and his brothers strain their resources to the utmost to provide a lavish funeral. It is not uncommon for nearly the whole harvest of a household to be consumed in making the beer and providing the cooked food required. In addition, animals must be slaughtered in honour of the dead. A poor man may be able to give his father only a couple of sheep or goats which he has had to borrow for the purpose. On the other hand, when Doohraan, the head of Siiyɛŋ biis of Tongo, died, rich in years and in honour, his sons slaughtered a cow, a donkey, and about a dozen small stock for his spirit; and Sayawuob postponed his mother's funeral for two years so that he should be able to give her a cow. At a big funeral, when the war parade (*dee*) and the whole concourse of clansfolk, kinsfolk, neighbours, and friends of the dead stand milling at the gateway, the oldest son climbs on to the wall to address the crowd. Wearing his ceremonial plumed helmet of straw, with a large red cock in his hand, he looks down haughtily upon the crowd and delivers his harangue. His speech, spun out with all the tricks of rhetoric in the Tale repertoire, is proud almost to the point of arrogance. He is relating the great deeds of his dead father or mother. They may seem trivial, sometimes, to the cold-blooded ethnographer—so and so borrowed five cows and paid them back in two years; so and so was a redoubtable farmer who in one year sold enough grain to buy three cows; another man boldly carried off his wife from under the noses of Mamprusi who had seized her; and this old woman was a potteress who by her own efforts earned the money to buy two cows, and in addition had been faithful to her first and only husband until his death. But it is not the substance so much as the occasion of these funeral panegyrics that matter to the Tallensi. At the end of his speech the son beats the cock (or if he is a rich man it may be a goat) to death on the wall and flings it to the crowd with a challenge that any person who can claim equal achievements should take it. But

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someone in the crowd always cries out that there is no one who can match these achievements or can claim that his father or mother did so.

This is the most dramatic though not the only expression of pride in one's parents among the Tallensi. They always show off an old parent, own or classificatory, with great pride to a visitor. I have often been led out of my way to shake the hand of a blind and senile old man or old woman who was too bemused with age to understand the long speech with which we were presented to each other. Women and children tell the stranger proudly, 'Don't you know so and so? I am his child.' This pride in one's parents is the reciprocal of their pride and satisfaction in the possession of children. It is so marked with old people in part because the Tallensi honour old age as a sign of good luck (*zusɔŋ*). The death of an old parent is an occasion of rejoicing rather than of lamentation for they say, 'Has he not savoured life to the full? (*U pu di ŋɔvɔr sa'ahi*).' At the same time the natives say that the death of an old man is a loss to his sons even though he had long relinquished the management of household affairs to them and had only a titular superiority in the affairs of the community. He may be blind, deaf, and senile, as Doohraan was, but he is still the head of the family and lineage, the hub of their unity, and the intermediary between them and their ancestors. However infirm an old man may be of body or understanding he is regularly told of everything that happens in the house, and his consent is always obtained before anything is done in his name, as everything that pertains to the family or lineage must be.

From all that has been said here it can be seen that filial piety among the Tallensi is by no means a simple and stereotyped attitude. Respect, affection, a feeling of mutual identification, and a sense of dependence, supported by the whole strength of the lineage system and the ancestor cult, are mingled with great freedom in everyday intercourse, as we shall see shortly, and with the strain of latent antagonism. It is an indication of the strength and internal consistency of the social system as a whole that ruptures between father and son are not very common.

Filial piety is a significant element in all Tale genealogical relationships. A person's loyalty to and solidarity with his lineage springs from his relationship with his father, his ties with his matrilateral kin from his relationship with his mother. The founding ancestor of a lineage is visualized as its 'father' and the progenitrix of a lineage segment as its 'mother'.[1] A person identifies himself with his patrilateral kin through first identifying himself with his father, and with his matrilateral kin by extending his identification with his mother. Economic motives, jural rules, and ritual sanctions work on the individual through his sentiments of filial piety.

This can be seen clearly in the interlocking of land tenure, local cohesion, and clan solidarity. The land a man owns in his clan settlement

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 201 ff.

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misfortunes and learns from a diviner that this is due to his dead father who is angry with him for leaving his *daboog* site derelict. That was the case with Pa'anbɔbis and Mambaŋya.

We have said previously that the sentiments, the rights, and the duties of parent and child to one another are traced back by the natives to the fact of birth; but in actual social usage they are fortified by strong ritual sanctions. Tallensi have these in mind when they say that a father's authority is irresistible because 'he sacrifices for you (to your ancestors)'. Your father 'owns (*so*)' you because he begot (*dɔŋa*) you; and he sacrifices (*kaab*) on your behalf because he begot you; you can only approach your ancestors through your father while he is alive, and if you do so after his death it is always through the intermediation of his spirit. It all goes back to the fact of birth, but the ritual sanctions are the most important instrument by which a father's authority is maintained, as our discussion has several times shown, particularly in the case of a proxy or classificatory father. Siŋ cannot defy his proxy father Na'abzɔ 'because', as he says, 'he sacrifices for me'; Da'amo'o chafes under the vexations Kutɔbis and his sons frequently put upon him, but he cannot, for the same reason, disregard Kutɔbis's authority over him as his late father's brother. It is very rarely indeed that a man in a paternal position will refuse to sacrifice on behalf of another who is in the position of a 'son' to him; but the fear of this sanction has a restraining influence in cases such as those of Siŋ and Da'amo'o. The whole hierarchy of authority in the lineage rests on this ritual office. Most of the men of Yinytla's inner lineage were opposed to his cutting himself off from the rest of Puhug, but they had to 'follow (*dɔl*)' him because he had custody of the lineage *bɔŋar* and 'sacrificed for them'.

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CHAPTER VII

THE GENETIC DEVELOPMENT OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

TO complete our analysis of the norms governing the relations of parents and children we must now glance at their development in the course of the child's life. Different themes are dominant at successive periods of the child's physical and social maturation. At first the dominant theme is the love and devotion of the parents; then their authority and responsibility come to the forefront; later the principle of reciprocity emerges as a leading idea; and lastly we see the differentiation and hidden opposition between successive generations on the surface.

Babyhood[1]

Tale babies (*bilie*, pl. *bilies*) are the darlings of the family. Totally naked except for the amulets of their spirit guardians around the neck, they are seldom quite clean. But then, bodily cleanliness is the least of the virtues amongst the Tallensi. Though I have seen babies at the sitting stage (about a year old) left alone in a shady spot for an hour or so, it is more usual for them to be in someone's care at all times of the day. Looking after baby is everybody's job—grandparents, older brothers and sisters (boys are as tender as girls with a baby), mother's co-wives, father, and, most important of all, mother.

Up to the time that it is weaned, which occurs towards the end of its third year, a baby (*bilie*) is mainly in its mother's care. For at least the first year it is wholly dependent on the breast for nourishment. It is given the breast whenever it cries or frets or the mother feels inclined to nurse it. Whenever the mother sits down to rest or has

[1] Tallensi distinguish different stages of infancy according to the feeding-habits and level of physical skill reached by the infant. They never count months or years, but a parent is often able to state roughly how many months or years have elapsed since the birth of the child, working it out, most commonly, by reference to harvest and sowing times or to the Great Festivals. A babe in arms is *bilie*; until it is weaned it is described as 'still suckling (*u na mɔŋ'arme*)'. If it is said to be still suckling but 'eating a little porridge (*u diit sa'abo biel-bel*)' one can infer that it is at least 2. The unweaned infant's stage of development is further specified by stating whether it is crawling (*u bɔŋ'arme*) or walking (*u kyenme*) or already talking (*u vɔlɔmrɔme*). When the child is weaned it is said to 'have left off milk (*u tuk biihim*)'. Lastly comes the stage, at between 3 and 4 years, when it is said to be old enough to have another immediately following sibling (*u saŋa nyeer marɔga*)—an idea we shall explain in a later chapter. The subject-matter of this chapter is supplemented by my paper, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, cit. supra.

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853 854 nothing else to do, her babe is at the breast, sucking hungrily or, if it is replete, just playing with the breast with its mouth, its fingers, and its toes. If the mother is away another woman of the household will give the baby medicated water to drink when it cries or will put it to her breast for comfort. It may be any woman of the family, but will usually be a co-wife.

853 862 By the age of 18 months a baby's diet is being regularly supplemented with small lumps of porridge, often pre-masticated by its mother. It is gradually and usually painlessly weaned by increasing its solid food (chiefly porridge), until it is eating the same food as the adults. The only time Tale women have to wean a baby abruptly is if they become pregnant through lack of self-control during the nursing period. Tallensi say that this distresses the baby but that harsh measures are not required as a pregnant woman's milk disgusts a baby. They also say that the premature deprivation of its mother's milk prevents the child from thriving. In fact the premature pregnancy of its mother is probably more of a psychological deprivation for the child than a nutritional loss. By the time a child has its milk teeth and is able to run about, at the age of about 3, it gets no more nourishment from the breast. But its mother's breast is still its chief solace. If it is in pain, or frightened, or just tired and peevish, it cuddles into its mother's arms and clings to her breast for consolation, and a younger baby makes this impossible.

855 ● 593 The completion of weaning marks the first stage in the child's physical and psychological severance from its mother. It has learnt to do without its mother for hours or days at a stretch. It remains contentedly in the care of an elder sister or other member of the household or even its maternal grandmother, as long as it is well and not hungry. It runs about and plays with other children of the homestead and neighbouring homesteads. It can talk fluently and so communicate its wishes to others. And its independence is increased when its mother becomes pregnant again and it can no longer run to the breast for comfort. Its mother is still the centre of its universe—and will remain so for two or three years more, in the case of a boy, and until marriage, for a girl—but the toddler has begun to glimpse the wider social space into which it is growing. Since it began to crawl it has often been told to 'go to your mother (own mother)', 'go to your mother so-and-so (mother's co-wife)', 'go to your grandfather (or grandmother)', 'go to your father (own father)', 'go to your father so-and-so (father's brother)', 'go to Yin, Tee, Baa (a sibling)' by one or other member of the family. Thus it has learnt to divide the people who come into its social space into 'own mother', 'own father', 'other mothers and other fathers' (who take care of it now and then), and 'other children', those whom it plays with, or eats with, or sees about the house. Own parents stand out clearly to the infant—its mother for obvious reasons, its father, as one man put it, 'because she (his little daughter) is often told and because she sleeps with her mother and sees

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me in her mother's room'. The other categories are blurred; any adult of the domestic group is described as a 'mother' or 'father'.

During these first three or four years a child's father, though he sees less of it than its mother does, is as loving and indulgent a parent. A baby can do no wrong; for, as Tallensi say, 'it has no sense (*u ka yam*)'. I have seen an infant screaming in a tantrum or nagging tiresomely at its mother while she was too busy with a household task, such as cooking, to attend to it, and its father come in and carry it off to soothe it. What discipline or frustration of impulse a child encounters in this period comes mainly from its mother or a young nursemaid. For example until it can drink by itself, an infant is regularly given a drink (*ŋuh*, causative from *ŋu*, to drink), at least once daily, usually when it is bathed. This is an item of hygiene with a quasi-magical stamp. The fluid may be plain water, unboiled or previously boiled and cooled down; or it may be a decoction of roots (*ŋaŋa*), the generic term for any vegetable products used in Tale leechcraft and medicine. Its composition is prescribed by the child's spirit guardian (*sɛŋər*). After its bath the mother lays the child on her lap facing sideways, holds her cupped hand to its mouth, and pours the drink from a small calabash into the babe's mouth. It splutters and chokes, kicks and screams with rage, but the liquid is poured down its throat relentlessly.

Until they can run about by themselves Tale children are not expected to be house-clean. By the age of 3, however, most of them have learnt to run outside to defecate during the day and to ask to be taken outside in the night. They are still apt to micturate indoors wherever they may happen to be. Tallensi do not inculcate clean habits by direct training or by punishing faults in a child. A child acquires cleanliness by a gradual process of habituation[1] and social maturation as its general self-control, its powers of locomotion and of speech, and its identifications with adults grow. But if a small child, already accustomed to run outside, has an accident indoors, it is likely to be rebuked by one of the adults, most probably its mother or an older sibling.

It is also the mother who stands for the most serious deprivation the child experiences up to the age of weaning, the loss of the breast. There is nothing in their folk-lore or customs suggesting that the Tallensi have anything but the most matter-of-fact attitude towards the female breast. I have seen a man, with that utter lack of squeamishness characteristic of most Tallensi, when treating his brother's wife for inability to nurse her baby, himself suck at her breast in order to test the flow of milk. But there is a custom which hints that the mother's breast is felt to be a special symbol of motherhood. If a woman is very grievously affronted by her grown-up son or daughter, and she takes hold of her breast and says, 'I suffered to bear you and this is how you treat me

[1] Described in my *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland* as a response to the expectation of normal behaviour.

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593 789 826 (*Man daa nye fara dɔɣi ki tɔɔm la ɣwala*)', this is a curse of the most terrible kind. For that reason, no doubt, none of my informants could quote an instance of a mother actually putting this curse on a child. The symbolism is of interest, however, in view of the stress Tallensi lay on the mother as food-giver in their conventional picture of her.

Childhood

857 593 The next three or four years of a child's life are probably its fr[illegible]st and happiest. Its energies are spent in play or in roaming around th[illegible] immediate neighbourhood of the homestead in the company of slightly older siblings and classificatory siblings. But children of this age delight in being with their parents too. They will hang around their mother in the kitchen and trot around or sit with their father when he is resting under the shade tree. They see and hear everything that is going on in the house and are tolerated at all domestic occasions. In this way, and through their mimetic play, they build up the rudimentary schemas[1] of ideas, manual dexterities, and sentiments out of which grow the skills, interests, and values of later life. Love and indulgence is still the keynote of their parents' and other close relatives' attitude to them. Tallensi say that small children at this stage are still more attached to their mother than to their father because it is she who feeds them. In fact, as we have already mentioned, throughout a Talǝŋ's life he thinks of his mother as the one who gave him food without stint, going hungry herself, if need be, so that her child might be fed.

857 868 593 By the age of 7 or 8 the child's world is becoming much more complex; and the shadow of discipline and authority is creeping over it. Until it reaches the threshold of adolescence, at about 12 to 14 years of age, it still remains free to play for much of its time. But from the age of 7 or so boys and girls are eager to participate in the adult routine of life and they become more and more involved in it. They begin by being given the simplest economic and household tasks such as scaring the birds from the fields of ripening grain, tethering the goats, rounding up the poultry—tasks which children of both sexes perform—or sweeping the house, carrying a tiny pot of water, gathering edible fungi or herbs for the pot, which girls only do. A very common task of both girls and boys at this stage is acting nursemaid to a baby. As this shows, there is very little social differentiation between them as yet.

857 593 462 868 By the age of about 9 or 10 children begin to adopt the sexual division of labour customary among the Tallensi, and with it the corresponding division of social roles and ideals. Boys start following their older brothers and take their turn at herding their father's cattle if he has any. They are becoming more skilful with the hoe and by the age of about 12 reach a high degree of proficiency. A 12-year-old boy helps his mother

[1] Cf. the discussion of this concept in my Memorandum just cited.

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to hoe her ground-nut plot and may have a small ground-nut plot of his own. Sometimes he will work short spells with his father on the home farm. He may have a fowl or two of his own and will be trying to breed chickens and guinea-fowl. He is thinking of farming and of the breeding of poultry and livestock in the same terms as his father does. A girl of 9 or 10 is learning from her mother how to cook, how to beat floors and plaster walls, how to carry out all the routine domestic duties of a housewife. She is acquiring the woman's view of life centred on marriage and motherhood.

On the economic side the child's world has become differentiated into two divisions in accordance with the sexual division of labour. It has become correspondingly differentiated on the structural side into a sphere of masculine interests and dominance and a sphere of feminine interests and dominance—overlapping spheres, it is true, but still with differences of major emphasis. At sowing time and harvest time, when a house is being built, a funeral made, or a sacrifice carried out, a boy is with the men, sometimes lending a hand and so acquiring the right ways of doing things, as often as not weaving himself in and out of the activity, together with his friends, in play.

It is striking to see how boys at this stage identify themselves with their fathers in speech, gesture, and behaviour, and this gives a bias to their character for life. Nindɔyat of Zubiuŋ's three boys, from the oldest, aged about 20, to the youngest, aged about 7, had their father's arrogant, vulgar egotism. Ɔmara's three sons, covering about the same age range, were, like their father, quiet, modest, and self-effacing. Samane's two small boys of about 7 or 8, who always followed him about like two pups, had his engaging swagger and blunt self-confidence. And one sees it, also, in the way a small boy will hector his mother—for instance, when the family is out sowing or lifting ground-nuts—in exactly the tone of voice and manner that his father uses. Little girls identify themselves in the same way with their mothers both in the work they do and in their ways of behaving. I used to learn a great deal about the opinions and personal attitudes of men and women from the gossip brought to me by their children. By the age of 8 or 9 a girl feels herself to belong to the women. She talks with disdain of her 5-year-old playmate or sister who still eats fowl and she is full of the women's gossip of babies and pregnancies and marriages.

Up to the age of about 5 a child is allowed much latitude in conforming to the standards and values of Tale culture. By the age of 8 or 9 it is 'acquiring sense (*ŋɔŋa yam*)', beginning to understand these standards and values and is expected to conform to them as far as its physical and social maturity permit. Its parents will henceforth assert their authority and exercise discipline to assure this, and thence comes a further social and emotional differentiation of the parents. Properly speaking it is only the father who exercises authority over a child; a mother rules her child

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through love and solicitude. Tallensi have a maxim. 'If you do not harass your child it will not acquire sense (*Nyɛn pu mugh i bii la u ku ŋɔŋa yam*).' They do not mean by this that to spare the rod is to spoil the child, as I thought when I first heard it, but that a child must be kept in order and made to conform to accepted standards or else it will not learn to conduct itself properly. They think of this as being chiefly a father's task. A mother, they say, will not thrash (*bo*) her child for misbehaving; she will only scold and upbraid (*nuom*) it. A father has the strength of will (*suhkpe'emɛr*) to thrash his child for misbehaving, and it is his duty to do so.

However, a father does not cease to be tolerant, kindly, and affectionate when his child becomes old enough for discipline. I have never seen a child actually being thrashed by its father, but I have had many accounts of punishments received by children and by men and women in their childhood, and I have often heard children scolded by a father or mother. From what has been said in the early parts of this chapter it can be surmised that Tallensi are very long-suffering with their children. If they punish them it is in anger admitted by the child to be justified. I have heard of children being punished for disobedience, for neglecting or spoiling a task entrusted to them, for yielding to temptation and breaking a food taboo, for stealing a mother's co-wife's ground-nuts, and for other similar faults. They are punished, that is, either for defying the authority of their parents, or for failing to conform to moral or ritual custom or good manners, or for causing economic loss or damage.

In fact Tale children are not often punished. By the time they are considered to be mature enough to deserve punishment for faults they have learnt to accept the control and authority of their parents and seniors as a natural thing and have begun to develop an adult's conscientiousness about the standards and values of their culture. It is noteworthy, for instance, that Tale children are rarely disobedient. Even adults rarely defy a parent's commands. A child of 7 or 8 usually keeps totemic taboos as strictly as an adult.[1] A 9- or 10-year-old has watched sacrifices to the ancestors often enough to have a good idea of what they mean. He knows what a ritual sanction is even if he does not yet understand it. His sense of property is well developed. He distinguishes clearly between *tuum* and *meum*. He knows his father's hen or sheep or cow and his father's brother's, and he can trace the boundaries of his father's farm plots. He has begun to take a responsible part, though but a very small one, in the scheme of domestic organization pivoting around his father. This is the root of his submission to his father's authority.

Two stories illustrate these points very well. When Naabdiya was about 8 years old he was lying on a mat in his mother's *dondɔŋo* one evening, half asleep, listening to the conversation of his parents. The

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 125.

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593 desire to urinate overcame him and being drowsy he wetted the mat.
863 His father saw this and flew into a rage. 'You, a big lad, and you do this,' he stormed. 'You yourself will wipe the mat with your body'; and he commanded the child to roll in the urine so as to wipe it up. 'I wept', said Naabdiya, 'and I was afraid, but I began to roll in the urine. Then my mother cried out to my father to leave me alone. "Do you want to kill the child? (she cried) I suffered to bear a child and you want to kill him. I myself will wipe it up." But my father did not allow her to do it. A woman's heart is soft because she has borne the child. Thus my father taught me wisdom (*paalɔm yam*).' The moral drawn by Naabdiya needs no comment.

593 The other story shows the strength of paternal authority and the degree to which a boy of 10 or 11 has become imbued with the values of his culture. The boy is Yindɔl, the first-born son of Zaŋ. In 1936 his father went to Kumasi for some months. Before leaving he put aside a small quantity of grain for the family's needs and gave orders that on no account should anybody go into the granary to take any more grain until his return. The supplies he had put aside were soon exhausted. With the help of small gifts from her kinsfolk his wife managed to scrape a meal every other day for her three children. She herself lived almost entirely off wild vegetables which she cooked to supplement the children's porridge. But though they were practically starving neither she nor Yindɔl would go to the granary, because, as Yindɔl said when he told me of their plight, Zaŋ had forbidden it, and in any case he, as a first-born, could not go into his father's granary. Why did his mother not ask her husband's brother to get her some grain from Zaŋ's granary? I asked. 'Oh no', said the boy, speaking as if he were the head of the house in his father's absence, 'she dare not do that. Besides, we shall need that grain for the farming season.'

593 But at the same time as the child is learning to take the authority of
866 his father for granted and fitting himself into the configuration of domestic relations, a contrary process is emerging. This process springs from the psychological and social cleavage that underlies the strong ties of duty, affection, and common interest between parents and children, the universal cleavage between successive generations. The structure of the family gives this process its form; and it is expressed through the economic organization and in ritual values. The 12-year-old is becoming differentiated as a person in his or her own right. Indeed, with boys this process commences at an earlier age, and its first sign is a small boy's refusing to sleep in his mother's room. Girls often continue to sleep with their mother until they are approaching puberty, unless there is a grandmother in the house; then they will go to sleep with her when they are about 6 or 7. A boy, however, is ridiculed by his playmates if he still sleeps in his mother's room after the age of 7 or 8. Generally boys of that age sleep with a grandparent or with the older boys in their

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doo, the room specially set aside for the boys of the homestead to sleep in. Tale ideas of propriety come into this. If a woman has children over the age of about 3 sleeping with her and her husband wants to come to her, he will order the children to go and sleep in another room. Older children are said to know that they must leave the room for the night when their father comes to their mother. Tallensi are horrified at the suggestion that children who 'have sense' might witness sexual relations between their parents.

As we have mentioned, a boy of about 12 is generally able to help his mother with the cultivation of her ground-nut plot, the produce of which is entirely at her own disposal. He often has a small ground-nut plot of his own and the produce of it belongs to him. He may, for instance, sell his ground-nuts for a few pence in order to buy himself a loin-cloth. Or he may prefer to keep them; and then he will store them in one of his mother's store-pots. He may have a hen of his own, too, as we have observed, and its eggs, or any chickens he succeeds in breeding from them, belong to him. Now it is very unusual for a boy to be given this first start in animal husbandry by his father. For he already has a share in his father's property. He will contribute to its acquisition by his labour, and he will one day, as the natives always emphasize, inherit it. A boy gets his first hen from his mother or from one of his matrilateral kinsmen, most commonly his maternal grandfather (*yaab*) or uncle (*ahɔb*), but sometimes his father's *ahɔb* or some other kinsman of that class. This is a quasi-paternal gesture on the part of the maternal uncle knitting his ties with his sister's son more closely. Many a Talɔŋ can point with pride to a cow which he bought with the proceeds of selling goats and sheep of his own breeding, the first of which was bought with the money he had saved from selling chickens bred from the hen his uncle gave him. And when the cow gets old he is obliged to take it to his mother's brother to be sacrificed to the latter's lineage *bɔŋar* as a thank-offering.

The significant point, here, is that a boy begins to act and feel as a social personality in his own right in economic terms and in opposition to his patrilineal line. His self-differentiation is a function of his matrilateral kinship, correlated with the antithesis between the *dug* and the *yir* in the structure of the joint family. Their childhood attempts at animal husbandry may be the first stage in the economic differentiation of sons of the same man by different mothers; and it is this that leads, at a later stage of the lineage cycle, to their separation. When that time comes it is a common thing for a man to 'beg' (*soh*) land, to build on and farm, from his maternal uncle. The gift of a hen is repeated at a higher economic level in a form appropriate to the nephew's wants and maturity.[1]

The economic self-differentiation of a son is both a sign of his psycho-

[1] Cf. below, Ch. XI.

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The economic self-differentiation is both a sign of his psycho-

logical and social self-differentiation from his father and a stimulus to it. 866
Naturally it results in conflict at times.[1] For example, Kpana-Tee took 593
his grandson, a boy of about 14, to live with him because the boy had 578
quarrelled with his father, Kpana-Tee's oldest son, who was farming on his own in one of the peripheral settlements. The youngster had two hens which he had bred from a hen given to him by his *dìɔb*. He wanted to sell one in order to buy a loin-cloth for the Golib Festival. His father said this was extravagance and forbade it. But the boy, supported by his mother, insisted that he could do what he liked with his 'things' (*bɔn*). This angered his father so much that he thrashed him. Thereupon the boy ran away to his grandfather, who took his part, and told him not to go back home for the present. As a man grows older the chances of such conflicts due to the clash between paternal authority and filial self-determination increase and are only kept in check by the sanctions of filial piety.

The process of incipient self-differentiation at this stage is distinctive 866
of boys. It does not occur with girls before pubescence. Until that stage 593
their relations with their parents continue to have a more childish stamp than is the case with their brothers. Whereas a 10-year-old boy would be ashamed to be found hanging round his mother when she is busy in the kitchen, a 10-year-old girl still enjoys sitting among the infants listening to her father in conversation with other men at the *zanɔnɛ*. One notices that little girls of about this age are more quiet and docile than boys. Attached as they are to their mothers, they do not yet show that diffidence towards their fathers in public which another two or three years will bring. They do not feel the weight of the father's authority yet, beyond the ordinary discipline he exercises over their manners and habits. But there is a rapid change as they get nearer to puberty and at the same time become more proficient in women's work and more absorbed in the social world of the women. A 12-year-old girl shows more respect to her father in public than her brother does. Like her mother she will always stoop or crouch to greet a male visitor of her father's or when she is offering her father food. With her mother she is to all appearances on intimate and friendly, almost sisterly, terms. She may still be sleeping with her mother, especially if the latter is past child-bearing age.

Between the age of about 7 and the beginning of pubescence at about 593
12 to 14 years of age, the pattern of parent–child relations crystallizes 867
out in the form it will have for the rest of the child's life. Proxy parents and classificatory parents are correctly discriminated and set in proper relation to own parents. Kinship sentiments are finally formed.

[1] But this is not associated with overt signs of 'adolescent instability', nor is there an institutionalized group revolt of adolescents against the generation of the fathers. Cf. my previously cited Memorandum.

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Parents and Children in Everyday Intercourse

593 576 One of the most interesting things about the relations of parents and children among the Tallensi is their conduct to one another in the intercourse of everyday life. It brings out, incidentally, the distinction always clearly made between own parents and proxy parents. There is a familiarity, almost a camaraderie, between parent and child that makes the observer wonder how the authority of the parent can be as effective, and the respect and obedience of the child as sincere as the evidence of custom and belief show them to be. In this matter the Tallensi resemble us more closely than they do some other primitive peoples. It is most striking in the case of the father. From babyhood up, Tallensi address their father, both own father and classificatory father, by his name. The term *ba* (pl. *banam*), father, is used to refer to one's father or classificatory father but never in addressing him, while he is alive. After his death it is often used in addressing him in prayer as an expression of reverence. It is also used as a term of respect when addressing someone from whom one is begging a favour, or to show particular deference or courtesy, chiefly to old men. A passer-by greeting an old man not closely related to him or her, or a person of rank such as a chief's brother, addresses him as father; a person asking a small boy not closely related to him or her, for a drink, says, 'Bring me the water, oh my father'; a man who has come to intercede with a friend on behalf of the friend's son pleads, 'Desist, oh my father, desist'. Similarly, parents speak of a child as *m-bii*, 'my child', of a son as *n-dawoo* (pl. *dawoos*), 'my son', of a daughter as *m-ɒɣawoo* (pl. *ɒɣawoos*), 'my daughter', but always address a child by name.

With this mode of address goes great freedom of speech and behaviour towards a father, particularly one's own father. If children are asked about their attitudes to their parents they always say that they do not 'fear' (*zo*—in the sense of 'to stand in awe of') their own father as much as they 'fear' their father's older brother. Children will speak directly to their father, argue with him, contradict him politely, if necessary, laugh with him. No topic of conversation is tabooed or barred by etiquette.[1] No one can tell from the behaviour to each other in ordinary intercourse of a man and his adult son or married daughter that they are parent and child. In fact, the greater the apparent comradeship of a young adult with an old man, the more likely is it that they are own father and child.

One's mother, on the other hand, is never addressed by name but always as '*ma*, mother'; but a mother's co-wife is commonly addressed by the name used for her by her in-laws. There is also more restraint in the manner in which a person speaks to his mother than in his manner

[864] [1] Sex matters, for instance, are freely discussed between parents and adult children, subject only to the rules of polite conversation.

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of speaking to his father. A boy might order his mother about when the family is out harvesting, for instance, and a girl might argue with her mother as spontaneously as if she were an equal. But the underlying attitude of deference can always be detected.

This undertone of deference is also present in intercourse with the father, only less obviously than in relation to the mother. For instance, if a child is some distance away and its father or mother wants to call it, he or she will shout the child's name. But if a child, even when grown up, wishes to call a parent he will go up to him or her. A boy or a man will borrow his brother's cloth without asking permission. He will not take anything belonging to his father without permission. If two brothers or sisters or a sister and brother are eating together either will start first and both may be dipping their hands into the dish of porridge at the same time. If a child is eating with his parent he will wait for his parent to begin first and to tell him to eat, and will wait for his parent to finish and leave the dish to be 'cleaned out (*veeh*)' by him. In particular, the familiarity between parents and children never goes so far as mutual teasing, as in a joking relationship. If a native is asked about this he frowns and says that it would be most offensive for a son or daughter to tease or joke with (*kooh*) a parent or vice versa. You cannot tease or joke with your parent or your child, the Tallensi say, because you do so with your grandparent or grandchild. We shall return to this presently.

We see, again, that there is an apparent paradox in the relations of Tale parents and children. The natives cannot explain it and are puzzled if they are asked for explanations. But if we take into account the whole complex of parent–child relations an interpretation is possible. What we meet again is that ever-recurring principle of Tale social organization, the conjunction of polar forces, the synthesis of tendencies that work in opposite directions. The sense of continuity between the generations, which is so strong among the Tallensi, has to be reconciled with the sense of divergence due to differences of generation and of interests between them, if the relations of parents and children are to run smoothly. In terms of sentiments and attitudes the authority parents have over their children must be reconciled with their love for them; and children must be able to show respect for their parents, to bow to their control, without ceasing to love them and without foregoing their own independence. Children are the fulfilment of their parents' life—and at the same time felt to be in some way their parents' rivals. Parents suffer and spend themselves to give life to their child. They provide for him and fix his place in society. But he can never escape from their constraint. In all their relations with each other parents and children have to cope with actually or potentially conflicting motives and sentiments as well as with the pull and pressure of divergent social forces.

The familiarity and friendliness between parents and children in their everyday relations is one of the means by which these diverse

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593 576 tendencies are reconciled. The liberty to address his father by name is a reassurance, to the child, of the love and solicitude that lie behind the authority his father exercises over him. Perhaps it is also an expression of the identification of father and child by the lineage principle. And the greater deference in his behaviour towards his mother than towards his father is a sign that he recognizes her control, though she seems to have only love and devotion for him. Familiarity in everyday intercourse compensates for the filial piety due to a parent in the more formal, particularly in the jural and ritual aspects, of parent–child relations. The greater overt freedom with the father compensates for the greater emphasis on respect and dependence in the child's relations with him; the franker signs of deference towards the mother compensate for the greater emphasis on her love for her child as against her authority over him.

593 Clearly there is a very high degree of consistency between the social images of the parents projected in the cultural norms of the Tallensi and the actual behaviour of children to parents. The mother is thought of as the food-giver. Her love for her children is subject to no limits or laws and her status in relation to them is almost sacrosanct. Her relations with them are based on love tempered with authority. The father is thought of as the source of discipline, the guardian of good conduct. He is strict without being harsh or tyrannous. His role is of special importance in the face of the community at large and in relation to the spiritual powers that govern human life. His relations with his children are based on his authority over them, his responsibility for them, and justice tempered with love.

Adolescence and the Principle of Reciprocity

883 For a Tale boy the years between about 13 and 20 bring changes in degree rather than in kind in his relations with his parents. There is no affective or social break to mark a transition from childhood to adulthood among the Tallensi. Even among the Hill Talis initiation into the cult of the External *Bɔyar* is not associated with adolescence; it can take place at any age. A boy's social development is a process of gradual advance along lines laid down in early childhood.[1] As he grows older

856 [1] Tallensi distinguish the main phases of a boy's development not by chronological age but by two criteria of a broader character, either separately or together, according to the situation. They have a physiological criterion and an economic one. Physiologically they distinguish three major phases, after babyhood, in a boy: (*a*) when he is still a 'small boy (*bumbil*)' with undescended testicles, showing, as they put it, only a 'pale scrotum (*lanzee*)'; (*b*) Pubescence, denoted by the verb *sol*, to mature physically, and marked by the testicles descending (*lana sigərəme*) and the emergence of pubic hair (*saŋkperuŋ kɔbɔt*). They say 'he has matured completely (*u sol ba'ahme*)' of a boy who has reached puberty and is entering manhood. (*c*) Lastly comes adulthood, when he is a 'grown man (*bonkɔrəg*)'. It is by reference to these physiological phases that men often date events in their life. The second criterion is that of advancing economic proficiency. A 'small boy' is capable only of scaring the birds from the newly

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he grows more and more proficient in the economic skills he began to acquire in childhood and better versed in the details of his culture. By the time he is 20 or so he knows most of what is known to his people about farming and animal husbandry, hunting and fishing, and building. He is wholly imbued with the values of his culture and has a good working knowledge of its institutions and customs. It is enough to enable him to play his part as a young man in the life of his community, but there is still much to learn which only years of experience and responsibility will give him. He is, however, an active if unimportant participant in corporate activities of the lineage and clan, and in the management of family affairs, with a right to his own opinions. In step with his growing social maturity a boy's field of social relations increases in range and in depth. His father's authority begins to loom larger, but at the same time his father's responsibilities on his behalf also increase and his own self-differentiation advances; and a theme that was of minor effect in their relationship hitherto comes into prominence. This is the principle of reciprocity.

During this period the identification of father and son is greatly deepened. It grows out of the intimacies and co-operation of everyday life. As they work side by side on the farm the father teaches his son farming skills and lore. When he performs a sacrifice at home his son is his assistant, learning from him how to carry out such rites, and what doctrines and beliefs lie behind them. In such situations he learns the names of his ancestors and begins to understand the structure of the lineage system and where he fits into it. He makes the acquaintance of matrilateral and sororal kin who come to take part in rites of this sort. The division between the men of the lineage and the women of the lineage, and the distinction between the father's side of the family and the mother's side become of direct practical relevance to him. Sometimes a man will call his adolescent and adult sons to him and tell them various things they ought to know in case he gets ill or dies. He tells them about his farms and other property, about his debts and those who owe him debts, and, a most important matter, about his ancestor and medicine shrines. In doing this he is, in effect, telling them what he knows of the history and traditions of his lineage and clan. These are matters which a man does not speak about to his daughters or wives. If they learn of them it is only incidentally, through listening to the conversation of the men. Daughters and wives are present at domestic sacrifices to ancestor spirits, but only sons are allowed to share in the cult of a man's private medicine shrines. Most important of all is the responsible

sown farms or from the ripening grain; a lad of 7 or 8 can be trusted to take care of sheep (*dɔl pihi*); older boys, up to the age of 14 or 15, are cattle herds (*hiem nigi*) and already help with the hoeing; after the age of pubescence a boy works on the farm side by side with the men—he farms (*u kɔɔrome*). These phases are also used to date events, often in conjunction with the physiological criterion.

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part an adolescent begins to play in the household economy. His work becomes an essential contribution to its welfare and hence he has a voice in its management.

A man who grew up under his own father's direct tutelage and learnt the arts of life from him in this way is said to be one who 'reached' (*paa*) —that is, knew in person—his father. Tallensi perceive that this is a mechanism of primary importance not only for maintaining the cohesion of the family and the lineage, but also for the transmission of their culture to their offspring. A man quoting precedents from the past for instance, in support of a claim to a debt or to a right to succeed to a particular office, bases his argument on the statement, 'I reached my father and saw such and such things', or, 'I reached my father and he told me this or that'. A man well versed in the details of the social structure, of ceremonial activities, or of economic lore, or in the finer points of etiquette, morals, traditions, and beliefs, says proudly, in explanation of his knowledge, 'Did I not reach my father?'; and a common excuse offered for ignorance is that the person concerned 'did not reach his father'.

The identification of father and son becomes of considerable social importance at this stage and henceforth. Thus it is a very common thing for youths of 18 and upwards to represent their fathers in jural and ceremonial affairs that do not demand their fathers' personal presence. If a man is asked by a clansman to act as intermediary (*poyasama*) in a marriage transaction, he will often send his son as his deputy. And if the intermediary chosen is a young lad, his father will act for him. So also a man sends his sons with the customary gifts he is obliged to contribute to his father-in-law's or mother-in-law's funeral. Old men always delegate their sons to act for them in political matters and often in jural affairs. In disputes about wives it is a common thing to see a man's son coming to the tribunal as his father's representative to answer for the actions of the brother whom he accompanies. In jural and ceremonial situations the identification of father and son is coextensive with the range of recognized generation differences within the inner lineage.

We have previously remarked that the identification of father and son is a fundamental element in the structure of the lineage. It is also, and more significantly from our present point of view, a fundamental feature of the normal personal relations of father and son. This is seen most simply in the affection and devotion so often found between father and son and in the strength of the sentiments and religious values associated with the father's original home.

The relationship of mother and son also changes during this phase, but again there is no abrupt break. As a boy approaches manhood he becomes more and more absorbed in the activities and interests of men and sees less of his mother in everyday intercourse. But his affec-

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tion for her remains. He still helps her to cultivate her ground-nut plot, if he has no younger brothers to take this on, and assists her in other ways. Later on, when he marries, his intimacy with his mother will be revived. It is to her *dug* that he brings his wife and in her care that he places the girl.

A girl grows away from her father as she approaches puberty. This is not due to physiological taboos, for there are none connected with a girl's puberty or with menstruation in general. There are no ceremonies to mark a girl's attainment of physiological maturity, nor is there any break in her affective relations with her parents. The only significant break in the steady process of social maturation for a girl is her first marriage. Her growing away from her father is due to the sexual division of labour and the corresponding division of interests in the family. Though there is no barrier to ordinary social intercourse between the sexes in a domestic family, there is the separation of interests and activities that we have mentioned before, and adolescent boys and girls are caught up in it.

A girl of 13 or 14 years and over does not run to her father and cuddle up to him as her 6- or 7-year-old sister might do. She is with her mother and the other women most of the day assisting with the more arduous domestic tasks. She helps to clean the house, to fetch water and collect shea fruit or firewood, to grind the millet, to cook, and to care for the younger children. At harvest time, or when they are beating the floors of their rooms, she does a full day's work with the other women. She is already adept in all these feminine skills and is well versed in all the gossip of the women. A girl of 12 or 13 can be left in charge of the house for a day or two while her mother is away. She goes to market by herself to buy or sell things for her mother; and also, a more important consideration for her personally, to display her charms and flirt with the young men. She accompanies older girls on firewood parties or when they go to dance at funerals.

When a girl approaches puberty her mind is set upon marriage. Tallensi estimate a girl's stage of development before marriage by the appearance of her breasts. Leaving aside betrothal of a girl in childhood, which does not require her consent, a girl is not considered to be mature enough for serious courtship until her breasts are formed (*u biiha n-yi*). She is then called a maiden (*pɔɣasarət*). Before that stage, when her breasts are budding (*u biiha m-pukət*), suitors may already be coming to her or soliciting her parents. A girl may be married before she menstruates (*lu sie*), though it is not considered seemly for her husband to sleep with her until she is capable of child-bearing. When her suitors come to her, probably the only person who knows which of them she likes best is her mother; and if she and her lover decide to elope her mother may help them. As we know, the bonds of affection between mother and daughter remain as strong as ever after the latter's marriage

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593 882 883 and are kept alive by frequent interchange of visits and of gifts. Thus, in the shea fruit season it is a common sight to see a young woman carrying a basket of shea nuts to her mother or fetching one from her mother. Even if a girl marries someone her mother dislikes, this seldom estranges them. If a woman with a young child has to go away for a few days and her mother is near, she usually choose to leave the child with her mother rather than with a co-wife. Thus during pubescence a girl's intimacy and identification with her mother deepens both in terms of her social personality and on the affective level. This is the genetic basis in behaviour and sentiment of the social tie conceptualized in the notion of *soog*.

It must not be thought, though, that a father's affection for his daughter fades away as she approaches marriageable age. Far from it. But it is inevitably biased by the expectation that she will sooner or later leave his household to marry, bear children for another clan, and cease to be a daily care and concern to him. Hence the saying that girl children are of no profit (*ka ŋoori*). Tale women are as proud as their brothers of their paternal ancestry. As we know, they never lose their bonds with their lineage kin; but they come, in time, to identify themselves primarily with their husbands' interests and not with their fathers'. Her divided interests and sentiments bring it about that when a girl reaches womanhood the element of antagonism in her relations with her father may become prominent. I have never seen it overt in relation to the mother.

As we have already recorded, a father's authority over his daughter is most conspicuous in connexion with her marriage, and it is this that often creates conflict between them. This is due largely to the fact that self-differentiation for a woman, both in economic terms and in status, comes through marriage. In principle, as we know, a man can dispose of his daughter's hand as he pleases, resorting to corporal punishment, if need be, to force her to comply with his wishes. Principles and practice often coincide, but, as we have seen, a good father tempers his autocratic rights with consideration for his daughter's wishes and welfare, particularly if, as is frequent, she is supported by her mother.

593 Usually, however, a man has much affection for a married daughter, and a woman, particularly in the early years of marriage, often remains greatly attached to her father. For instance, Tɔŋ-Yikpɛmdaan, perhaps because he had lost most of his children, was greatly attached to his two married daughters. When one of them was attacked by a mysterious lingering illness he himself went to fetch her home and insisted that she should stay with her mother until she became well again. But a man's attachment to his sons is very much greater as a rule. A man may be greatly distressed at the death of a young married daughter, but it is as nothing compared with his grief over the death of a young adult son. And this applies to women too, though they suffer great grief at the death of a married daughter.

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These affective divergencies spring from the different social relations of father and son on the one hand, and father and daughter on the other. Though a woman's ties with her paternal family are never severed, a man's jural responsibilities for his daughter cease with her marriage. He never loses the moral and religious authority of a father, however, or the corresponding ritual responsibilities for her. His curse is as potent as ever. The shrine of her spirit guardian is in his keeping and he sacrifices to it on her behalf when her husband requests him to do so. His chief ritual responsibility arises if she is persecuted by an evil Predestiny (*Yinbe'er*). It is his duty to have the rites of exorcism performed so that she can bear children and fulfil satisfactorily her role as a wife. He is obliged to send ceremonial gifts to the funeral if she or his son-in-law dies; and he must 'fetch her funeral home (*die koor*)' and carry out the rites that bring her spirit back to her ancestral fold when she is dead. He has a very definite social and personal interest in her children too. When a woman bears her first child her husband must send immediately to tell her parents and they demonstrate their continued affection and concern for her and her children by sending her gifts of food and other necessaries as generous as their means allow. A poor man might send only a basket of unthreshed guinea corn or millet and a couple of guinea-fowls, while his wife sends some shea butter, vegetables, and firewood. A rich chief I knew, when his first-born daughter had her first baby sent a procession of his younger wives bearing an assortment of gifts, including a 25-lb. bag of salt, several baskets of grain, a sheep, six guinea-fowls, and various luxury articles. Throughout her life a woman has a right to substantial gifts of grain from her father's house at harvest time, and to a home if she is left homeless. Women make a special point of collecting these gifts of grain at harvest time whether they are in want or not. As Tanzoo, the wife of a well-to-do man with enough grain and to spare, said when she received a large basket of early millet from her brother, 'I should feel ashamed not to fetch this grain. My co-wives would scoff saying I have no brother, no father.' Thus it is a source of pride, a test of family solidarity and, most important, a recurrent demonstration of a right to share in the products of the patrimonial estate which they might have owned if they had been born men.[1] These duties that a man has towards his daughter are the nucleus of his relations with her children. They are socially prescribed and fall upon his heirs when he dies.

From Adolescence to Adulthood

Let us return to the relations of father and son during this phase of the latter's growth and study it more closely. The son is a member of

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 178.

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593 882 his father's household making an essential contribution to its economy by his labour and skill; he is his father's future heir; he will one day sacrifice to his father's spirit; above all, it is through him that his father's agnatic line is socially and physically perpetuated. And yet there is the cleavage of successive generations between them and the self-differentiation of the son which begins in childhood.

593 421 From adolescence onwards economic co-operation is the sheet anchor of the relationship between a youth and his father. The guiding principle is the rule that all those who work together to supply the needs of the household are entitled to a just share in the products of their common labour, and its corollary that the fruits of individual labour belong to the individual. But the working of this rule is complicated by the fact that the head of the household owns the land and 'owns' (that is, has authority over and responsibility for) his dependants. Thus a man 'owns' his son's labour and the products of it. Strictly speaking, a son cannot own property of any kind while his father is alive, and a father can dispose of a son's property as he pleases. By this rule a man does not even 'own' his children if his father is alive; and this means proxy father as well as own father. Tallensi assert this rule very emphatically, both in speech and in act, for they hold it to be the crucial sign of a father's authority. Though this authority arises automatically from the fact of begetting, its most concrete expression is found in the economic relations of father and son. When I asked the Chief of Tongo how many cattle he had he replied soberly that he had none; all his cattle belonged to his old father Nakyɛna'ab. Though, in practice, Nakyɛna'ab will not forbid the chief from doing what he pleases with these cattle, the chief never disposes of a cow, either in ritual or by sale or in jural transactions such as the payment of bride-price, without telling his father and obtaining the old man's formal consent.

The Tallensi regard the economic relations, the jural relations, and the moral and ritual relations of father and son as different aspects of the same thing. Each of these categories of relations has a binding force on the other categories. A man 'owns' his son because he begot him; but he sometimes says that he has authority over his son because the latter is dependent on him and that he has responsibilities for his son because the latter works for him. In the same way a son must work for his father as an obligation of filial piety; but his work is also the return he makes for his father's economic support and for the ritual and jural responsibility his father bears on his behalf. Just which factor is emphasized depends on the particular situation. The different elements of this configuration are linked together by the principle of reciprocity. Its essence is the idea that duties imply equivalent rights for the *tarɔm*, the junior or inferior person, as well as for the *kpeem*, the senior or superior.

This configuration is not peculiar to the relations of own father and son. It is the general pattern prevailing between the head of a household

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and any of his dependants—between husband and wife, proxy father and son, older brother and younger brother. And, as we have mentioned before, its elements often stand out more clearly where the consolidating effect of the emotional ties between own parent and own child is absent. They emerge clearly, also, when there is a divergence between a son's (or other dependant's) desire for independence and his father's (or the household head's) claims on his labour and loyalty.

By the time a young man marries he has advanced on the path to economic independence beyond the stage of breeding chickens for himself. He has his own ground-nut plot and generally also his *sensɛyar*. This is a plot of land allocated to him by his father, or the head of the household, where he can grow the ordinary cereal crops. It may be no more than a few hundred square yards or it may be up to an acre in size. The larger his father's home farm (*saman*) is and the fewer his brothers, the larger will a young man's *sensɛyar* be. A man allocates these private plots to his sons with an eye to the future. When, in course of time, the sons (or *their* sons) separate, each will keep the plot given to him by their father as the portion of the patrimonial land that henceforth belongs exclusively to his agnatic descendants.

A young man cultivates his private grain plot and ground-nut plot in the spare time left after he has done the work required of him on his father's farm, which always has the prior claim. There is no hard-and-fast arrangement. Much is left to the young man's own discretion. He knows very well that the first essential is to make sure of the common food-supply. At the same time his father manages to keep a discreet but sharp eye on his economic activities. It is a firm rule of etiquette that no member of a family should go anywhere without informing the head of the family. When a young man goes off to hoe his grain plot or ground-nut plot in the morning he will tell his father, in what seems to be a casual aside, what he is going to do, if he has not already told him the previous day. Then the father will either let him go or he will ask his son to leave it for a day or two until they have finished this or that job on the household farm.

In a well-run family, and at most times, this loose arrangement works perfectly smoothly. But there are times when clashes occur; and there are families in which friction over this issue is common between father and son. For instance, there was the tussle between Naabdiya and his younger son Mosuor. Mosuor wanted to lift his ground-nuts so as to sell them and buy a new cloth for the Gɪŋgaaŋ Festival. Naabdiya, however, insisted that *his* ground-nuts should be lifted first, before the dry weather hardened the ground and made the task more laborious. Mosuor protested that Naabdiya was being unfair to him; Naabdiya's wife and the other children could help him in the meanwhile; and Mosuor went off to his ground-nut plot. This incensed Naabdiya, who cried out that the boy was flouting his commands, and in his anger he

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593 pronounced the ominous words, 'You will see'. In an hour or two Mosuor's temper cooled off and he began to feel uneasy over the enormity of his offence. His father had uttered what amounted to a curse; and before the day was out he had called on one of his father's oldest friends to ask him to go and beg Naabdiya's forgiveness for him.

593 421 We have seen in a previous chapter that as a son grows older and his conjugal family increases, his desire for independence grows stronger, owing to the increasing wants of his wife and children. But it is not easy for a son to obtain his father's permission to set up on his own. It may take five or six years of pressure on the son's part before the old man gives way. A son only desires to go out on his own if he has younger brothers who will remain at home to work for his father—there would be no motive if he were the only son. When these younger brothers marry the pressure on the common resources of the household grows and it becomes expedient to disperse temporarily. Economic separation does not remove a son from his father's authority. He can be and often is called upon to help with the work on his father's land; his property still belongs formally to his father. Indeed, any sheep, goats, and cattle he may acquire by his industry or receive for a daughter's bride-price are housed in his father's homestead and not in his.

593 167 Nowadays a common form of independent labour and enterprise by young men is to go south for a season or longer. The chief economic stimulus for this is the desire for money to buy clothes or to make certain of the payment of bride-price for a wife. A father is not bound to provide his sons—or any other dependant—with clothes. These young men go in the dry season carrying crates of fowls to sell or seeking 'white man's work'. The youths who go at other times of the year are often stealing away without permission. But in the dry season, when farm work is at a standstill, a man will often give his sons permission to go south until the rains commence. Some men do so very readily in the hope that the boys will bring back money and 'things'. Others are still reluctant to let their sons go off, even for a short while, lest they should be tempted to stay away for a long time. Tallensi say that the freedom of movement of to-day is undermining parental authority. They say that if a man is severe with his sons, as he has every right to be, they simply run away and go south. Hence the men who think that working abroad spoils a youth or who cherish the ideal of keeping the family together all through their life, and therefore try to restrain their sons from going south, have to be tactful in handling them. Observation shows that it is usually the wise and considerate father, the man who manages his family well, who succeeds in restraining his sons from making long sojourns abroad. Where there is much friction between father and son, the son is apt to find a way out by going south; and, as we have mentioned, the likelihood of a son's leaving home is increased if one or both of his own parents are dead and he is living with

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a proxy parent. As is natural, fathers and sons take different views of this situation. Sons do not think that they are showing a lack of filial loyalty when they go abroad. For, they argue, it is only a temporary absence and the money they earn will eventually accrue, in part at least, to the family exchequer. As has been mentioned previously, no man ever turns away a son who comes home from abroad, whether he brings any goods and money or not; and a son who does bring back 'things' and money is doubly welcome.

We said earlier that a father owns all his son's property. This might seem to contradict what was said about the independent ownership by a son of the livestock he acquires by breeding from a gift hen or by other means. The Tallensi themselves do not admit a contradiction in this. They see it as an instance of the gradation of rights and duties that is distinctive of their whole social organization. A father's over-right entitles him to veto his son's using his own property in ways that seem extravagant; but it would be an injustice rightfully resented by the son if he were stopped from using his fowl or goat or sheep for purposes that public opinion considers legitimate. Thus everybody would agree that a father who forbade a son from using his own fowls and guinea-fowls in his courtship, or from selling his own ground-nuts in order to buy a cloth, would be acting unfairly. The case of Kpana-Tee's grandson (p. 195) illustrates this principle.

The rights of a father and the rights of a son in the son's property are reconciled by the principle of reciprocity. If a man makes use of his son's goat or sheep he should, in due course, make an equivalent return; for example, by using one of his own sheep or goats to do something for the son. This object is immediately achieved if the son's property is used for the son's benefit, as in the payment of bride-price. There is no book-keeping, but in the long run the son should feel that the gains he has received are commensurate with the amount of his own property that has been used up. A proxy father should be more careful in this regard than a man's own father. A proxy father is less concerned about the future of his 'son' than the latter's own father would be and is therefore sometimes inclined to take selfish advantage of his paternal authority. Though they have no alternative but to submit, young men deeply resent unfairness of this sort, whether on the part of their own father or on that of a proxy father; and this may be the first stimulus to their determination to set up on their own.

This is epitomized in one of the reasons Tallensi regularly produce when they are asked why young men secede from their paternal households. They say: 'It is because of hens and eggs.' Every man has at least a hen or two, even if he has nothing else, and, as we know, his hen symbolizes the starting-point of his accumulation of property. But hens lay their eggs anywhere and this gives rise to petty quarrels. Anybody who finds an egg claims it and another member of the family may dispute

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593 the claim. But if the head of the family claims an egg no one can gainsay
596 him, so a young man might find himself left without any eggs to breed
422 from. That is why he wishes to be independent. It is a kind of rudimentary myth summing up the economic causes of family fission. The point of interest is the emphasis on the inequitable behaviour of the 'father'. He uses his economic authority to his own advantage without making an equivalent return and thus prevents the 'son' from getting a start on the road of economic independence.

593 The adjustment of father's rights and son's rights has an added subtlety where cash is concerned. Supposing a young man returns from abroad with four or five pounds in cash that he has saved. According to the letter of custom he should hand all of it over to his father. But money, unlike a cow or a sheep, can be easily concealed and does not require attention; our young man can retain a part of his savings without his father's knowing of it. If it is his own father he may keep only a few shillings, particularly if he has recently been, or is about to be married and the money is wanted to pay his wife's bride-price. If it is his proxy father he will probably hand over only a pound or two, unless, again, the money is required for the bride-price of his wife; and then he will try not to hand over the money until his father-in-law actually demands the bride-price. It is common knowledge that this is the regular practice of young men returning from abroad. Fathers have no power to stop it, though most of them would like to; for up to a point, the young men are within their rights. Have they not 'taken their own legs and gone to get their money' by labour that is always arduous and sometimes dangerous? Again conflicts are inevitable, though as yet not more frequent than over other forms of property. For some men are only too apt to fritter away the money entrusted to them by a dependant before the time comes for it to be used for the benefit of the latter.

593 As we have mentioned before, one of the heaviest responsibilities a man bears on behalf of his son, or for a dependant standing in the same
584 economic and jural relationship to him, is in 'marriage affairs'. It is the bridegroom's father or proxy father who has to undertake the series of jural actions required from his paternal kin in order to legitimize the union. In marriage by arrangement (*pɔɣalak*) it is the bridegroom's father who starts the negotiations and carries them through. The young man himself hardly sees his bride, after his first few courting visits, until she is brought to his home. In marriage by elopement (*pɔɣazaŋɔr*) the bridegroom's father's consent is essential for the marriage to be properly concluded. While, as we have already indicated, a father never openly disapproves of a son's marriage but on the contrary always displays apparent pleasure over it, he can easily cause it to break down by holding back the bride-price.

As we know already, the two significant jural acts in the conclusion of a marriage are the sending of the placation gifts (*lu sendaan*) and the

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payment of at least a part of the fixed bride-price of three cows and a bull, or their equivalent. The essential responsibility for the performance of these two acts lies with the bridegroom's father or father's heir, subject to the formal consent of the elders of his inner lineage. Formally, the bride's paternal kin send their invitation to the bridegroom's paternal kin to *lu sɛndaan* through the head of the latter's nuclear or inner lineage, and make their demands for bride-price through the same channels; for no jural act takes place except in the framework of the lineage system. But actually the responsibility for satisfying the bride's kin falls on the bridegroom's father. He must 'find the things'—the fowls and guinea-fowls—for the placation gifts; he must send off the intermediary (*pɔɣasama*) who carries them to the bride's family; he must furnish the animals or goods or money to pay the bride-price. 'Is it not his child? (*Pa u biiga*)' say the natives, implying that this is a duty arising out of the fact of parenthood. In part it is a specific duty; in part it is an aspect of a general responsibility that a man bears for his son's jural relations. Thus if his son's wife is abducted it is the father who calls on the other members of his inner lineage to stand by him in taking action to recover the wife. If his son has abducted another man's wife the father is directly answerable. Strictly speaking a son cannot contract a debt involving heritable property such as cattle or large sums of money without his father's authorization. Even if the son is a man of substance, a wise creditor will insist that his father's (and also his brothers' of the same nuclear lineage) consent to the transaction be obtained first and made known to him. If this is not done the creditor's chances of recovery are small. It becomes a question of one man's word against another's and Tallensi are past masters in the art of putting off a creditor. The concurrence of the debtor's father and brothers fixes liability for ever, and if the debtor dies before settling the debt his father, or his heir, is liable. These rules do not apply to small sums of money, say a shilling or two, or things of small value such as a hen or a loin-cloth. But petty borrowing and lending rarely takes place between people who are not friends or close kin, and it is thus generally fitted into the scheme of reciprocal aid that obtains between friends and kinsfolk.

In their jural aspect these obligations of a father arise from the fact of 'begetting (*dɔɣam*)'; in their economic aspect they are greatly influenced by the principle of reciprocity. Where obligations of such great social consequence are involved, the principle of reciprocity is not limited to particular individuals but it binds their heirs and successors as well owing to the operation of the lineage principle. One or two cases will show how these two aspects are interwoven.

While Tampoyar was courting his wife he had very little recourse to his proxy father's help. The few shillings he had received from selling ground-nuts and a fowl or two sufficed to provide the occasional penny

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he gave the girl whenever he saw her in the market and the gifts of tobacco and kola nuts he took to his prospective parents-in-law. He had some guinea-fowls of his own and his proxy father gave him a few more to take as presents to his prospective mother-in-law. Just when he thought the time was ripe to elope with the girl her father warned him not to attempt it as she was under a ritual taboo which prohibited her from marrying in this way. To his chagrin Tampoyar was therefore compelled to ask his proxy father Kurug to negotiate for the girl's hand. At this point Kurug began to temporize. Marriage by arrangement is an expensive business. Had not Tampoyar better wait a while until the guinea-fowl chicks were bigger? Tampoyar's answer was a fit of sulks, a warning to his 'father' that he felt injured. Had he not stayed at home to help with the farming when he could easily have followed some of his contemporaries to Kumasi? Then he would have earned enough to pay the expenses of his marriage himself. Why should he tire himself out in farming if this was the treatment he got in return?

Meanwhile Kurug had been talking to the other men of his inner lineage about the affair. He felt that it was high time Tampoyar had a wife, and he knew that if the young man were frustrated his work during the coming farming season would suffer. Moreover, he might take it into his head to run away to Kumasi. Kurug's lineage brothers shared his views. Besides, Kurug had enough cattle to pay the bride-price at once if need be and it was his duty to get a wife for the youth. It was his duty as the boy's proxy father; it was a return he owed the boy for the labour he had been contributing for several years to the household economy; it was, also, a return he owed to Tampoyar's dead father. When the latter died Kurug had inherited his wife and his property as well as his children. Kurug had benefited from this inheritance and must now repay it to the dead man's son. And so he at length agreed to arrange the marriage. He asked one of his neighbours and clansmen, whose grandfather had been a sister's son (*ahɔŋ*) of the bride-to-be's clan, to act as intermediary and began to get together the fowls and guinea-fowls that would be needed for the ceremony by which the bride is given to her future husband's lineage representatives.

Kurug himself provided the bulk of the 'things' required for this ceremony, but Tampoyar gave a couple of his own guinea-fowls. Kurug provided the basket of millet with which the bride's mother's co-wife was 'seen off home (*beeh*)' when she paid her the customary formal visit shortly after the marriage, and he provided all but one of the fowls and guinea-fowls for the placation gifts, Tampoyar himself giving one fowl. Lastly, it was Kurug who gave the two cows which Tampoyar's father-in-law demanded as the first instalment of the bride-price. These were cows to the purchase of which Tampoyar's labour had contributed; and if Kurug had died before Tampoyar's marriage, Tampoyar would have inherited them.

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This case, typical of dozens that occur every day among the Tallensi, shows how the motif of duty and the motif of reciprocity are intertwined. This appears still more clearly when 'father' and 'son' farm separately. Thus Sayabo of Kpata'ar was Nyaaŋzum's late half-brother's son. He occupied the same homestead as Nyaaŋzum, but separate quarters with an independent gateway and farm for himself. When Sayabo abducted a Gorogo man's wife, the injured husband, supported by his father-in-law, brought a case against Sayabo at the chief's court. Nyaaŋzum, together with Sayabo and almost all the other men of their inner lineage, went to answer the suit. Nyaaŋzum's defence was simple and straightforward. He knew of no bar to the marriage. They had no kinship ties with the girl's paternal kin, nor clanship ties with Gorogo. In former times Kpata'ar men and Gorogo men had not hesitated to abduct one another's wives. He was ready to pay the bride-price at once if the 'owner of the child (*biiraan*)'—that is the girl's jural guardian in this case, the father—agreed. The latter, however, refused to accept Sayabo as a son-in-law, so she was returned to her first husband and Nyaaŋzum forfeited his hearing fee of three shillings. Incidentally, this fee was made up of a shilling contributed by Sayabo, a shilling from Nyaaŋzum, and a shilling from another member of the inner lineage.

Why was Nyaaŋzum so ready to accept the responsibility for Sayabo's marriage and to answer for him at court, seeing that Sayabo was not farming with him? In the first place it was his duty as Sayabo's proxy father; and being a man of principle he would not evade such a duty. Even if he disapproved of the young man's behaviour he must answer for it in public, and he was under a jural obligation to pay the bride-price for the youth's wife, from his own resources if need be. In fact, however, he would not have offered to pay the bride-price with such alacrity if it were a question of using his own resources, for he had his own sons to think of. Another factor came into the situation, as Nyaaŋzum himself explained to me.

When Sayabo's father, Nyaaŋzum's half-brother Galəmɔyar, died, Nyaaŋzum inherited a number of cattle from him. Some were cattle Galəmɔyar had received as bride-price for a younger sister of his and Nyaaŋzum's. These cattle accrued to the *faar*, the patrimonial property, in the strict sense; Nyaaŋzum was entitled to dispose of them as he pleased since he was the last of his father's sons. In addition, Galəmɔyar's herd included cattle he had himself bought or had received in payment of his daughters', Sayabo's sisters', bride-price. As Sayabo was still only a boy, Nyaaŋzum took possession of these cattle too. In theory he could dispose of them as he pleased. In practice Sayabo had a prior right to them, since they were his father's own earnings and his sisters' bride-price animals, and Nyaaŋzum had merely a nominal overright. Nyaaŋzum had utilized most of these cattle for his own purposes; but he considered himself morally bound to make an equivalent return

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593 577 for them to Sayabo. This was the main reason why he was ready to meet Sayabo's bride-price debt immediately. There was also a religious sanction in the background. Had he refused to support the youth, Galəməyar's spirit would have become angry. He would have gone to their father's spirit and protested against the ill-treatment his son was receiving at his brother's hands, and the father would have punished Nyaaŋzum.

593 672 In the same way the father is the person who bears the essential jural responsibility for his son if the latter commits adultery. Though the negotiations for the reconciliation with the offended lineage or clan are carried out through the head of the inner lineage or medial lineage or even wider lineage segment to which the wrongdoer belongs, the animals sacrificed in the reconciliation rites are provided by his father.

593 577 Similarly a father is responsible for his son in all ritual matters in which the son is concerned as a member of the lineage or as the person through whom his father's line is perpetuated. A man is responsible to the ancestor spirits for performing the rites by which his child, boy or girl, is placed under the mystical care of a spirit guardian (*sɪyər*). It is the father's duty to provide the flour, beer, fowls, guinea-fowls, or other animals needed for these rites. If a child gets ill, its father has the duty of consulting a diviner and is obliged to provide any money, animals, or other goods that may be needed for the sacrifices to the ancestors, the treatment, and the payment of the medicine owner. Of course, if it is his own child a man does not think of such obligations as a duty but rather feels them to be a natural action of love and solicitude. But I have known cases where a proxy child was concerned in which the proxy father was less moved by affection than by his sense of duty and fear of mystical retribution. Among the Hill Talis it is a father's duty to provide the animals, flour, and beer required for his son's initiation into the External *Bəyar* cult. And, to complete this catalogue of examples, a father must take the initiative and provide the 'things' needed for the rites of exorcism, if his son is persecuted by an evil Predestiny (*Yinbe'er*). If his daughter-in-law is the sufferer, he must request her father to come and perform the exorcism and must provide the contributions due from the girl's husband's family.

593 The mutual rights and duties of parents and children among the Tallensi have a feature of particular interest which has already been indicated in the course of our analysis, but deserves further notice. They can be used as weapons of coercion by one side against the other, the principle of reciprocity being turned into an *ad hoc* sanction. The case of Tampəyar illustrates how a son can make use of the fact that his working power is essential for the household economy to force his father to get him a wife. This sanction is openly admitted by fathers. One day at Yinduuri I came upon a group of men engaged in a vehement argument. In the middle of the group was a man whose leg was badly

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swollen with guinea-worm. It appeared that he had recently inherited his late brother's widow and her two children, a boy of about 16 or 17 and a girl of about 15. He had given this girl in marriage to a Sii man, but she had taken a dislike to him and had the previous day run back home again. Now the Sii man was anxious to make sure that the girl would be regarded as his legitimate wife. He feared that she would either be kept at home now, or else take the first chance of eloping with someone else. So he at once sent an intermediary with the prescribed placation gifts, and this emissary had just arrived. But this procedure was quite contrary to custom. The placation gifts must not be sent or accepted if the bride is at her father's house. The group of men was discussing the situation. It was in the course of this discussion that the girl's proxy father said that he could not take any decision without consulting her brother. 'He is a youngster (*bii*)', he said, 'and I own him. But he is the girl's brother. And you see that I am laid up with a bad leg. If I don't consult him, will he help me on the farm and do my errands for me?'

In using these mutual rights and duties as a sanction parents have the advantage over children. Within the limits of the inner lineage a father's payment of his son's bride-price is thought of as an obligation to the son. But as against the society at large it has an extra nuance. A son has no jural *locus standi*. He cannot get a wife unless his father is prepared to accept responsibility for the bride-price, even if he himself provides the means of payment. Thus Naaho, who was earning good wages, paid all the expenses of his courtship. He bought all the 'things' needed for marrying his wife by arrangement, as well as the two cows asked for her, out of his own pocket. But he was powerless to arrange the marriage by himself. He had to appeal to his father's brother, under whose paternal authority he was, to undertake this. It is true that it would be a most unusual thing for any man to refuse to take formal responsibility for his son in such a situation. But the mere fact that the latter cannot do without his assistance reinforces his authority over his son. Again, this consideration is of more importance for a proxy-father's authority than for the natural father's. It is the same, as has been observed earlier, with the ritual sanctions a proxy father commands.

We have spoken of the principle of reciprocity in the preceding paragraphs without attempting to define it. To do so it is necessary to take into account a wider context than the relations of parents and children. 593 577

The principle of reciprocity or, more accurately, of equivalent returns[1] is implicit in the relations of parents and children. The natives see it as following on the mutual rights and duties of parents and children, and not as an explicit rule of conduct. There is a large voluntary element in

[1] I am indebted to Professor Radcliffe-Brown for this concept and for stimulus in appreciating its significance. I owe much, also, to Malinowski's *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, both here and elsewhere in this book.

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593 577 its working, as we have seen. Moreover, it applies equally to all members of a household and is implicit in all kinship and affinal relations. It arises out of common interests, mutual rights, and mutual obligations and is a way of giving expression to them. As these interests, rights, and obligations are of different kinds and degrees, corresponding to the differences in quality and degree of the relations involved, so there are different kinds and degrees of reciprocity. But all forms of equivalent returns have the general purpose of keeping social relations on a stable and mutual footing. The greater the field of common interests between persons, the less does deliberate calculation enter into the working of this principle. Hence the closer and more personal the relationship between people, the less formal is the rendering of equivalent returns for services or loans. Mutual services, between lineage segments, as, for instance, in the performance of one another's funeral ceremonies, are highly stereotyped. A son-in-law's services to his father-in-law must be immediately recompensed with food and drink. But between father and son, brother and brother, or husband and wife there is a continual give-and-take on a basis of all-in reciprocity. Equivalent returns cannot be demanded; it depends upon the good sense of the person concerned as to when and how he makes them, even in situations where custom lays down a definite norm. Meanness or selfishness in this respect gives rise to ill feeling and so to disharmony.

593 577 426 Tallensi sum up the observance of the principle of equivalent returns under the idea of debt (*samər*). Debts are goods or services accepted or requested on the definite understanding that they will be repaid and it is a maxim that debts never die (*sama pu kpira*). A man's heirs are liable for his debts.[1] Where equivalent returns are the customary mode of recompense, accepting goods and services is not a debt. A man 'borrows' (*pɛŋ*) money or a cow from a distant clansman and that is a debt; he 'takes' (*zaŋ*) or 'accepts' (*die*) his son's or wife's belongings if he needs them, and it is not a debt (*la ka samər*).

The most important criterion determining whether or not a particular service or gift or loan creates a debt is kinship. Members of a nuclear lineage and of an expanded family do not incur debts by borrowing from one another. The same rule applies to cognates whose kinship ties are as close as those of members of a nuclear lineage. If a man obtains something from his own mother's brother, for example, it is not a debt. This is definite. In theory there can be no debts either between members of the same inner lineage, or cognates whose kinship ties are as close as those of members of one inner lineage. What happens in practice

[1] Unless, as has been mentioned, they were not made a party to the debts at the time they were incurred or were not told of them by the debtor himself. The question of the procedures and sanctions that can be used to secure payment of a debt do not concern us here. One of the chief sanctions is public opinion. A defaulter finds it very difficult to borrow again.

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varies from case to case and from lineage to lineage. We have seen how this works out among the members of Ziŋgan biis. Another instance is that of Yinworəb and his 'son' (his grandfather's brother's great-grandson) Kadɛne. Yinworəb gave Kadɛne three shillings to pay the hearing fee when he was summoned to the chief's tribunal. This was not a debt. Three or four months later Yinworəb borrowed a goat from Kadɛne. Again, this was not a debt but it was tacitly understood to be an equivalent return for the loan of the three shillings. By contrast, Loyani used some sheep belonging to Maantiya, his father's half-brother's grandson and therefore his 'son'. This he regarded as a debt because the sheep were earmarked for the payment of Maantiya's wife's bride-price.

Outside the inner lineage, however, a debt is incurred by accepting goods or services from a clansman. The only exceptions are if the lender is also a matrilateral kinsman of the borrower—e.g. a uterine kinsman—or a close friend.

The principle of reciprocity, as seen in operation in the family and lineage, ties on to a more general theory of social action in Tale society. It is a particular application of the principle of equilibrium in the social system. The idea that in the long run mutual services or favours should balance is inherent in Tale social organization. Canalized by the lineage system, it means that a son or grandson or later descendant can make or expect equivalent returns for an action of his father or grandfather or earlier ancestor. It is a matter of pride as well as of moral or jural obligation to see that one benefit is balanced by another. For example, it is a common thing at an elder's funeral to see a distant clansman of his, who is not obliged to do so, bring a sheep or goat as a valedictory offering to the dead. The donor explains that there is a special reason for this offering. The deceased had been a friend of his father. When his father died the deceased brought a goat as a valedictory offering to his father. His goat is a return gift. The maxim that 'debts do not die' springs from this principle; and it applies not only to the relations of the living among themselves but to their relations with their departed ancestors. A grandson may have to atone for his grandfather's sins, as happened with Kuwaas. Years of constant ill luck were attributed by a succession of diviners to the sins of his paternal grandfather, whose name he bore. Kuwaas I, as Chief of Tongo, had betrayed his office by abandoning his clan and seeking only his personal safety once when the Hill Talis attacked Tongo. This was a grave sin against the ancestors, who demanded a large expiatory sacrifice, and until this was paid the sin would continue to lie heavily on the descendants of Kuwaas I. The right of self-help by raiding, and the notion that retaliatory warfare and retaliatory abduction of women are simply 'cancelling a debt (*lɛrəg samər*)',[1] belong to the same category of ideas. The principle of reciprocity underlies all these categories of social behaviour.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 236, 245.

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The Duty of Supporting the Parents in Old Age

Parents retain their rights and authority over their children throughout their lives. A man may be so senile that he can take no active part in household or public affairs. He is still the father of his children and the head of the household, the owner of the farms and livestock that belong to the household. Any of his sons living with him is automatically bound to farm for him. On this basis alone, and apart from the dictates of filial piety, an old man who has a son need not lack economic support. It is the same with an old woman who has a son. In her case, however, the stress is on the duty—a duty which is felt to be in part a privilege—of a son to care for his old mother, since she does not own any land.

An old man who has no adult sons need not necessarily lack food or shelter. He either has land of his own or can obtain some from a kinsman, and it is a question then of securing labour to work it. This, however, is no easy matter. Sporadic assistance can be obtained from kinsmen and neighbours, but it is impossible to get regular full-time labour. No one would go and work another man's farms for a whole farming season, either for a wage or as a kinship obligation. Thus an old man in this position is not likely to have more than the minimum of food and other necessaries. Tendaan Teroog was in this position. His only adult son was not living with him and he was dependent on others for the cultivation of his land. When his neighbours and kinsmen were too busy with their own farms to help him, his wife did the weeding in a rough-and-ready way. If it were not for the gifts of grain sent to him by his adult son from Mampurugu, Teroog and his family would have lived at starvation level right through the year. As it is they were just managing to subsist.

Cases like that of Teroog are not numerous, simply because the number of old men who are incapable of doing some work for themselves is small. In the whole of Tongo I knew only six old men (apart from chronic invalids) who were completely incapable of work. Another ten or fifteen (according to the criterion of efficiency employed[1]) could work, but would probably not have been able to support themselves and their wives without assistance.

A somewhat different and less frequent case is that of Sabaalug. He is an old bachelor living with his half-brother. But he does not help with the farming and so is not entitled to be supported by his brother. He keeps himself by 'scrounging' (*bimh*) a bit of food or a basket of millet, a few pence or an old garment from his matrilateral kinsmen and friends. A childless old woman like Tɔŋ, who lives with a 'son' of her long dead husband ekes out a poor existence in the same way. Tallensi are very

[1] Kuwaas, for example, might have done much more work if he had not had two adult sons; Vɔŋraan-Tee would certainly have worked less if he had had a son to help him; Ta'aŋ spent so much time on ritual and communal affairs that he did less work on his farms than he was capable of.

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tolerant of such old folk, but they consider their mode of life a pitiable one, not so much from the purely material aspect as from the social side. 'Who will mourn his death? Who will give him a proper funeral?' they say. But such cases serve as examples for an argument they often put forward. I once heard it very well put in a comment on life in the coast towns. There, said the speaker, you starve if you have no money. Here, at home, no one need die of destitution. If he has no children he can always find a roof with a kinsman, either one of his close agnates or his mother's brother's people, and keep himself alive by the gifts of food he gets from kinsfolk and friends. Though a man is not bound to be over-generous, and he is not compelled to feed a kinsman living with him who does not contribute to the common pool, it is an offence against the ancestors to refuse food to a kinsman in straits.

Still rarer are instances of people who come to live with a daughter in their old age. I knew of only two cases, one that of an old man, the other of a woman. It is considered to be unbecoming for a man or woman to live with a married daughter. It is not compatible with 'in-lawship' (*deen*) and Tallensi say it causes friction. A married daughter contributes to her parents' material welfare indirectly. Her chief contribution is through the bride-price paid for her. A cow received for a daughter's bride-price may be the starting-point of the accumulation of more live-stock. In times of severe shortage a bride-price animal may be used to purchase grain and so save the family from starvation. Most important, however, is the use of a daughter's bride-price to pay off bride-price debts of her natal family. It helps, therefore, to add to the woman-power of her father's household upon which a large part of the household's productivity depends. The occasional assistance given to a man by his daughter's husband in farming, house-building, thatching, and so forth is a small item relatively to the total labour required to maintain a household, but it is enough to turn the scales in a difficult year. Many of the homesteads that were being built on the Tong Hills in 1936 would not have been completed that dry season if the owners' sons-in-law from other parts of the country had not come to their aid.

In short, a native's chief economic asset in old age (and this applies to sickness too) lies in the possession of sons, best of all own sons, but also proxy sons, that is, all those who have an interest in the patrimonial land which is for the time being in his keeping. As we already know, more distant 'sons' than those of the nuclear lineage are very unlikely to live with and work for a man whom they recognize as a classificatory father. Tallensi say that one of the reasons why sons are preferred to daughters is because they will farm for one when one is old. Women are even more apt than men to emphasize the insurance value of sons just because they are more dependent on a son's sense of moral obligation to care for them.

Yet Tallensi do not explicitly state it as one of the duties of a son to

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888 577 593 support an old father economically. They assume support of an old father to follow automatically from the economic and jural relations of parents and children and from the moral obligations of filial piety. It is simply an aspect of co-operative production and joint consumption in the household under the household head's management, and a result of the principle of reciprocity. If a man's only son, for example, were living in his native settlement and refused to have his father or proxy father in his homestead, it would be a monstrous breach of ethics. He would lay himself open to immediate punishment by the ancestors; he would, indeed, be unable to participate in the life of the community since he could not act for himself in ritual or jural affairs.

888 593 577 167 This is an hypothetical instance, for I know of no such case. But nowadays the question of supporting an aged parent does occasionally arise when men emigrate from their native settlements to seek work abroad or to farm outside Taleland. Cases are occurring of men who stay away abroad and postpone their return home from year to year, leaving an aged parent to struggle on alone. They are far from numerous —I knew of some six or seven only, counting two cases where the sons had genuine grounds for their absence.

Native opinion about these absentees is illuminating. They are not criticized for neglecting to send money home regularly. Tallensi do not expect regular remittances from relatives working abroad and still tend to regard the occasional remittances that are sent home as windfalls. Absentee sons are censured rather for deserting their parents, for leaving them without the companionship and the social support of a son. Tɛndaan Teroog's son used to send baskets of guinea corn and maize to his father from Mampurugu. Nevertheless, the old man kept pressing him to return home; and when the son died suddenly people said it was because he had 'rejected' (*zaɣah*) his father. He should have come home long ago to be his father's companion (*kɔɣal*, vb.), to act for him in jural matters, assist him in ritual activities, and manage the household for him. The same sentiment was uppermost in Maantiya's mind when he explained why he could not leave his proxy father Saantarəba, though the latter was able to support himself and his wife with occasional assistance from kinsmen. Maantiya went down to the coast every dry season carrying fowls to sell and usually stayed away three or four months. He was always home again before the rains began. He said: 'I cannot abandon my father. He has no one else.' When I was going home in 1937 a number of men asked me to find their absent sons in Kumasi or Accra or elsewhere in the south, and to try to persuade them to return home. 'Tell them', said one old man, 'that we do not care about the money or things, but we want them to come home.'

888 593 577 We have said that there is a more definite emphasis on the duty of a son to provide for his mother. There was an old woman at Kpata'ar whose only son had been abroad for some years. She sent him many

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messages begging him to return, but to no avail. 'That good-for-nothing', said Tiezien, contemptuously, telling me about this youth. 'He leaves his mother to starve here while he goes wandering abroad. He is no person (*u ka nit*).'[1]

This feeling that it is a son's bounden duty to support an aged mother is strongly marked in the case of one's own mother. It sometimes happens that a woman is widowed while still young and is left with one or two young children. She remarries into her late husband's clan and has children by her second husband. When she gets past child-bearing age, even if her second husband is still alive, she usually goes to live with her oldest son of the first marriage. Tallensi say that the right person to support such a woman is this son, as her second husband has no further interest in her after she ceases to be able to bear children.

Any surviving widow of one's own father or proxy father (i.e. a close co-wife of one's own mother) is felt to be entitled to support, but in this case a ritual sanction enters the picture. Tallensi say a man is bound to support his own mother 'because she bore you (*ɔn-n-dɔyi la zugu*)' It is a direct moral duty to her. But one has to support a mother's widowed co-wife because she was one's father's wife and he would be angry if one did not. This rule applies only to widows of fathers of one's own nuclear lineage. Outside that range no obligation is felt to support an old widow whom one's mother would have called her co-wife. It now becomes a question of more abstract ethical values summed up in the concept *dulɔm*. There is no exact equivalent for this concept in English. According to Tale ethics, any act of deliberate malice or even thoughtlessness that causes trouble or suffering to another person through no fault of his own is immoral. For example, deliberately giving a person wrong information that leads him into trouble; or refusing to give or lend a person something that can well be spared, and so causing him to suffer a serious loss; or if one is in a position to prevent a person getting hurt and makes no effort to do so—all such actions come into this category of moral delinquency. They incur *dulɔm*. The concept covers both the sufferer's resentment and the ethical stigma attaching to the wrong done to him by allowing evil to befall him. The native phrase is 'it brings (or is) *dulɔm* (*de mar dulɔm*)'; and *dulɔm* bears mystical retribution in its track.

Tallensi say that if an old woman whom one calls 'mother' (either because she is the widow of a classificatory father, or out of courtesy, because she belongs to one's mother's generation of wives of the clan) has no one to support her and appeals to one, it is *dulɔm* to refuse her. *Dulɔm* is one of the reasons why one cannot refuse food to a kinsman in need. It was the reason Kuŋaaŋba gave for allowing his old 'mother'

[1] This expression of contempt contains a wealth of meaning for the native. It means, broadly, someone who has no sense of decency or is oblivious of his social responsibilities.

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888 Toŋ to stay with him. Banɔrəg furnished another instance. One afternoon he looked in on his way home from the market and found two
593 elders with me. He told us he was having some trouble with Ziba, a
577 young man of his inner lineage. Ziba had an old woman, whom he called 'mother', living with him; but he had suddenly decided to get rid of her. Banɔrəg told us how he had expostulated with the heartless young man. 'It is an evil thing to do', he concluded, amid murmurs of assent from the two elders. 'A man who drives out an old woman to starve becomes blameworthy before Heaven (*u kpera Naawun taale*); it is *dulɔm*.' Banɔrəg's efforts, in this case, were in vain since he had no paternal authority over Ziba. The intervention of an older kinsman does not always check disgraceful treatment of domestic relatives, and public opinion only takes notice of it after the event and then often has no power to make the culprit remedy it.

A Methodological Point

593 181 The cases we have quoted in the preceding pages are précis of statements, opinions, and explanations given to me by Tallensi themselves. If space allowed, a score of cases could be quoted for each one I have recorded. I mention this because it might seem incredible, to anyone who has not lived amongst the Tallensi, that a people so primitive in their mode of livelihood should balance up rights and obligations in the most commonplace activities of their lives in so calculating a fashion. But the picture I have sketched is not a distortion. Description and analysis inevitably reduce human action to slow motion and men's motives to a seemingly mechanical pattern. In reality Tale parents commonly act as spontaneously and generously as parents in any other country and their children respond as spontaneously and sincerely. But even the most spontaneous actions and feelings of the natives occur within the framework of their social organization and subject to the values postulated in their culture. Social organization and cultural values allow of alternative forms of action and affect in any particular situation, but not of infinitely numerous alternatives. Where the relations of parents and children are involved these alternatives are not unlimited; and allowing for differences of personality and character, as the natives themselves do, we can say that the alternative that will be selected in a particular situation is determined by the structural relations of the individuals concerned. Men's motives and their social relations are closely integrated with one another among the Tallensi, as we have emphasized before. In their actual social behaviour Tallensi do not have to stop and think out every situation before they act. The individual's ideas and attitudes have been shaped by the social structure and the cultural norms. The framework of his social relations is as much a part of him as he is a part of it. He automatically evaluates every situation in terms of his social relations. To put it crudely, every Talaŋ carries a set of

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labels bestowed upon him by the social system and a set of ideas and attitudes implanted in him by his culture. In every situation he responds to the relevant labels borne by the other people who enter into it with action springing from his ideas and attitudes. What we have tried to do is to examine this process of response in slow motion and to show how the ideas and attitudes evoked by certain labels can be traced back to the structural relations of the people concerned.

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CHAPTER VIII

TENSIONS IN THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Rivalry between Parents and Children

593 578 PERHAPS the most extraordinary feature of Tale parents' relations with their children is the recognition, in custom and belief, of the latent antagonism behind their mutual identification and comradeship, their devotion and co-operation. We have already had some glimpses of this. A psycho-analyst might say that the Oedipus complex is apparently openly recognized in Tale culture. He would have to add that it is built into their social organization in such a way as to enable them to control it. The mystical ideas and ritual symbols in which the rivalry between successive generations is clothed form the cultural mechanism by which it is neutralized and made to serve socially useful ends.

784 [184] 578 593 We have discussed the taboos observed by first-born children among the Namoos in our previous book. We showed there[1] that the distinguishing mark of all Namoo clans as opposed to non-Namoo clans is the observance of these taboos. Among all Namoos a man's first-born son and daughter may not eat the domestic fowl, may not wear any of their father's garments or his quiver, or look into his granary during his lifetime. The latter taboos are connected with the fact that a man's clothes and quiver and granary are intimately identified with his social personality. As the natives put it, a man's clothes and quiver are imbued with his bodily exuviae from constant contact with his body, while his granary is associated with his unique status in the patricentral family. It is easy to see that these possessions are peculiarly apt symbols of a man's social self. It is not surprising, therefore, that though these taboos are not formally observed by non-Namoos analogous usages with the same symbolic significance occur among them.

In our previous book we studied the significance of these taboos as quasi-totemic symbols in the system of inter-clan relations; but they have other dimensions of meaning as well, like all Tale customs and ideas that give expression to fundamental elements in their social organization. For they go back to deep and universal tendencies in human psychology. These taboos have a particular meaning in the contemporary structure of Tale society as symbols of corporate units; but underlying this is the deeper meaning they have in the relations of successive generations and for the individual himself in the conduct of his life.

We are concerned here with these latter aspects of their meaning. We cannot attempt to unravel all that lies behind them, but their super-

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, chs. v and viii.

[p. 222]

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ficial symbolism is transparent. What they mean is that a child may not be equated with his or her father while he is alive. As we have observed, though these taboos do not occur among non-Namoos, the ideas and sentiments they express are as frankly admitted by them as by Namoos. It was a Tɛnzugu (Talis) man who gave me the clearest statement I obtained on the struggle between the Destinies (*Yina*) of father and son. I remember also being struck by this during the ceremony of exorcising the evil Predestiny of Sinkawol of Kpata'ar's wife. Just as the most important rite of all was begun somebody noticed that Tiezien, Sinkawol's proxy father, was absent. Nyaaŋzum, Sinkawol's proxy grandfather and Tiezien's proxy father, shouted for Tiezien to come out of the homestead. Tiezien shouted back, in some anger, 'No, I won't come. They are exorcising my daughter-in-law's *Yin* and I should be there? Oh no. Is she your (plural) wife or mine? No, it is not for me to be there.' There was a moment's pause and then Nyaaŋzum called back, 'Well, leave it then, you are right.' The point was that a man must not equate himself with his son, particularly where the latter's procreative status is concerned. But grandfather and grandson are equated with each other, as we shall see more fully later. And by the same principle a woman must not be equated with her daughter in her reproductive capacity. Thus when a man's daughter becomes a mother for the second or third time he gives up sleeping with her mother even if she is still of child-bearing age. Tallensi call this an important taboo. It is significant also that among both Namoos and non-Namoos an analogous taboo to that of the father's granary holds between a mother and her first-born daughter. While her mother is alive a girl may not uncover her mother's chief storage-pot (*u pu sugəl u ma doko*). This taboo is not stressed so much as those that discriminate a child from its father, as might be expected in a society so thoroughly organized around the patrilineal line. But it does show that the tension between the generations among the Tallensi is not the product of *patria potestas* only, but arises out of the whole network of the relations between parents and children.

The avoidances of first-born children are not the only customary expression of the tension between the generations. A man and his oldest child do not eat together. 'You and your oldest child do not dip your fingers into the same dish of food together,' the natives say, 'for if you did perhaps his finger-nail might scratch you and that would bring misfortune on both of you.' This prohibition is not subject to ritual sanctions, though the misfortune that would follow the symbolic act of aggression would be of a mystical character. Tallensi share a dish with the youngest child for preference; and it is not an uncommon sight to see a man eating with his youngest child while his oldest son is sitting near by eating separately.

Then there are the restrictions we have already mentioned that must be

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observed at funeral ceremonies by anyone who has a parent of the same sex as the deceased still living. Similarly an oldest son may not deputize for his father in making sacrifices to an ancestor shrine which is in the latter's custody; 'he is too near to inheriting the shrine', the Tallensi say. The implication is that if an oldest son deputizes for his father in relation to the ancestors he is anticipating his inheritance and this is tantamount to wishing his father dead. Even during the interval between the mortuary rites and the final funeral ceremony of a dead father it is his younger sons who make sacrifices in his name to the ancestor shrines that were in his possession and will be inherited by the oldest son.

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All these customs indicate how strongly the Tallensi feel that there is an underlying rivalry between parents and children that must not be allowed to drive a wedge between them. While his parent (particularly his father) is alive, a child (particularly a son) must not act in any way that suggests a desire to usurp the parent's place; and this holds vice versa for the parent too, as the incident between Tiezien and Nyaaŋzum shows. It is implicit in the Tale concept of incest. It can be summed up in the formula that father and son may not take each other's place in the procreative relationship, which is the fundamental relationship defining their positions in society relatively to each other; but this principle is extended to all social relations of father and son, particularly the first-born son. Tallensi state this quite openly, and it is worth quoting what Yarəg of Gbizug, who is not a Namoo, said to me once in this connexion. There had been a ceremony the previous night at which the Gbizug tendaana had been represented by one of his younger sons. I asked Yarəg why he did not sometimes deputize for the tendaana in these ceremonies, for surely he knew more about the rites than his younger classificatory brothers? 'No', he replied, 'that is impossible. I am like the tendaana's oldest son, for my father was his full (*soog*) brother; I cannot put on his cap and skin and perform these rites for him. We are Talis and it is not a taboo for us, but it would not be right, it would not be seemly.'

We have seen that the undercurrent of rivalry is most apparent in the relations of father and son. Marriage removes a daughter from the arena of possible conflict with her parents and her social role does not create interests and motives that bring her into competition with either of her parents. She cannot take the place of either her father or her mother. Removal from their control has the effect, if anything, of strengthening her uterine tie with her mother and her lineage tie with her father. The first-born daughter is associated with the first-born son in these taboos by the principle of sibling equivalence.[1] She is the first-born child of her sex, and stands for the filial generation as much as her brother does. It is their first child, whether it be son or daughter, that makes a married couple into parents. Moreover, we must not forget the Tale maxim that

[1] This principle is discussed in Ch. X below.

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she might have been a son but for the accident of birth. A son's situation is entirely different, as we have shown in the preceding chapters. He remains a member of his parental family all his life. He does eventually take the place of his father in the life of the community and could be suspected of wanting to hurry on the day when this will happen. His desire for independence is liable, as we have seen, to run counter to his father's plans and demands. Every advance in his social and economic development might be interpreted as an added threat to his father's dominance. He will not be his own master until he has no father. The very principle of reciprocity which plays such an important part in their economic co-operation conceals mutual jealousy about property. And the social cleavage between his generation and his father's is emphasized by the wider context of fatherhood. A man's father's brothers, who are identified with his father both by generation and by birth, stand between him and his full independence as his father's heir. Even after his own father's death they retain authority over him. As we have seen, the cleavage between successive generations usually comes to a head more decisively with a proxy father than with one's own father.

Tallensi themselves make no bones about the matter. 'Your oldest son is your rival (*I bikpeem a i daɓaa*)', the men say bluntly. I have heard this phrase used by both Namoos and non-Namoos from every part of the country. 'Look at my oldest son', an elder once said to me. 'He would not care if I should die to-morrow. Then he would inherit all my possessions, he would own the *zɔŋ* and he could take his ease. The things connected with an oldest son are hard (*bikpeem yɛla ntɔ*).'

This candour in fathers is not matched by their sons, who never admit the rivalry. They laugh it off as 'an affair of custom (*de yɛl nla*)', or simply say that it is a ritual matter, a taboo (*kihər*) like any other taboo that one accepts without questioning. And they generally launch out, with obvious sincerity, into the kind of panegyric on the advantages of having a father that has been previously quoted (p. 172). This is as one might expect, for it is the fathers who feel the threat to their dominance; and they feel it the more strongly as they grow older and their powers decline.

The taboos of first-born children begin to be enforced in early childhood. By the age of 7 or 8 a child takes them as seriously as his parents.[1] But it is only after the son is married and has a growing family, when the father is getting on in years, that the opposition symbolized in ritual observances emerges as an opposition in practical life. It coincides with the son's increased striving to free himself from his father's economic control. This is expressly symbolized, among all the Tallensi, in a taboo which the first-born son begins to observe about the time he gets married. He and his father must not meet face to face in the gateway of their common homestead. This taboo is as scrupulously observed as

[1] *Cf. Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 125.

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593 578 the other taboos of first-born children. Its meaning is plain if we bear in mind what the gateway and the *zɔŋ* symbolize in the structure of the family and the lineage.[1] Significantly enough, a first-born daughter does not observe it.

Eventually, when the son's older children are reaching adolescence, the opposition between his father and himself culminates in his formal separation from his parental family. We have noticed before that fission in the joint family is basically due to structural and economic factors. In the case of an eldest son's hiving off, Tallensi say that it is often brought about by the jealousies of the womenfolk. The son's wife or wives complain that they are not getting a fair deal in the distribution of food-supplies in the joint family. They are always nagging at their husband on that account. So when a son 'goes out on his own (*yi u kɔkɔ*)' natives say it is in order the better to support his wives and children. But the separation is actually due as much to the relations between the man and his father as to the purely economic causes. It is an instance of the convergence and congruence of structural principles and economic necessities.

593 578 884 Most commonly an eldest son separates off formally by cutting a new gateway for himself in the family homestead. The native phrase is *bit u zanɔr* ('slit his gateway'), and it describes precisely what happens. The wall of the homestead is cut through so as to make an extra gateway leading into the son's quarters. Though he and his wife and children will very often use the main gateway, he is by status the owner of his own subsidiary gateway and cannot formally clash with his father. At the same time he achieves a considerable measure of economic independence. He will have his own bush farm and small home farm and be responsible for providing the bulk of the food required by his wife and children. But he still helps his father and younger brothers with their farm work, and receives some food-supplies from his father in return if his own supplies are insufficient for his needs. Sometimes, however, an eldest son moves out altogether. His father may let him build a homestead on a bush farm belonging to the family, or he may migrate to one of the peripheral settlements. As we have seen, it usually takes a few years for a son to achieve this step. I have heard young men who were pressing their claims for a separate gateway express impatience with an obstinate old father and even resentment against his apparent tyranny. But when the parting comes it is usually amicable, and father and son continue to be on excellent and intimate terms thereafter. The son is still under his father's final authority in jural and ritual matters.

593 578 777 *The Native Theory of the Tension between the Generations*

Tallensi explain the rivalry between father and son by means of the

[1] Cf. Ch. III above.

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mystical concept of the *Yin* or personal Destiny.[1] There is, they say, an inborn antagonism between the *Yin* of a father and the *Yin* of his eldest son. While the son is still young his *Yin* is weak, but as he grows older his *Yin* grows more powerful and wants to make him master of his own affairs. The son's *Yin* wants to destroy the father's *Yin*; but the father's *Yin* desires the father to live and be well and remain master of the house. It wishes to continue to receive sacrifices from the father. Therefore it will try to destroy the son's *Yin*, and if it is the stronger *Yin* it will cause misfortune and perhaps death to the son. That is the reason why father and son must avoid meeting in the gateway of the homestead and why it is better for them to separate, after the son has reached a stage of maturity when his *Yin* begins to be as powerful as his father's. In the same way an oldest daughter's evil Predestiny (*Yinbe'er*) is a threat to her mother's life and health. When Sinkawol's wife was waiting for her evil Predestiny to be exorcised she was not allowed to go and visit her sick mother for fear that her *Yinbe'er* might cause her mother to get worse.

To appreciate the profundity of this interpretation we need to understand the Tale notion of *Yin*. It is one of the most difficult of their religio-psychological ideas to translate into our categories of thought. Indeed, it is not a precise notion but, like all Tale ritual ideas, a configuration of mutually overlapping ideas, beliefs, and values.

Yin is the shortened form of *Naawun* or *Naayin*, the Tale term which can best be translated as Heaven. But whereas *Naawun* is concerned with all mankind, each person's *Yin* belongs uniquely to that person. It is the symbol of his individuality, of what makes his life history different in his own eyes from that of every other person. If he falls ill he is enduring something that is the common human lot, and he tries to cope with his illness by the same measures that anybody else would take. But, he asks himself, why should he have fallen ill just at this time and not his brother or somebody else, for instance. When he kills an animal in the hunt, or buys a cow, or marries, or has a child he goes through experiences that every man has, and his social personality takes on attributes that are part of the social personality of every man of about the same stage of social maturity. Yet they are his own private experiences. They form part of the unique continuity of his personal development. None of them was inevitable. They are due to the intervention of chance in his life; or, as the Tallensi believe, to the action of the mystical agencies that dictate the course of human life.

These, very briefly, are the ideas, as nearly as one can translate them into our modes of thought, behind the Tale notion of *Yin*. It is a mystical notion because their ideas of causality are couched in a ritual idiom and are rooted in ritual beliefs; and it serves several ends. Tallensi do not

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 144, for a discussion of this concept from a different angle.

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But a man's most important *Yin* is that with which certain of his ancestors are associated. This too may come to him in childhood, though it does so more commonly in early manhood. Usually it manifests itself to him through an accident or a coincidence. Thus a young man falls ill shortly after he has bought a new hoe or killed an animal in the hunt. The diviners then declare that his illness was caused by his *Yin*; his ancestors so and so, and so and so, are thus revealing themselves as his *Yin*; the hoe or the animal is their vehicle; they brought illness on him because they demand that he should accept them as his *Yin* and sacrifice to them. The young man will then build a shrine dedicated to these ancestors placing the skull of the animal or the blade of the hoe on it, and will henceforth sacrifice to them on this shrine. This is his first and most intimately personal shrine, and it plays an enormous part in his life thereafter. As far as his own personal affairs are concerned, it will always be his most important link with his ancestors. It is through his *Yin* that they exercise the most direct influence upon his life and that he seeks to maintain their goodwill specifically for himself. When he becomes head of his joint family he will entrust most of the children born into the family to his *Yin* as spirit guardian. Every important step in his social development will be registered in his relations with his *Yin*; it may be by a special sacrifice, or it may be by a change in the location of the shrine, or the addition of an ancestor to the group of ancestors who have revealed themselves (*naam*) as his *Yin*. A man's *Yin* is both the chart of his life and the helm with which he steers his way through life.

All the ancestors and ancestresses of a man have a potential mystical relevance for his life, but they have the same potential relevance for any of their descendants. His *Yin* ancestors, on the other hand, are concerned exclusively with him, for his own sake, so to speak. They form a particular combination, usually of very recent forebears, who do not belong together in just that grouping for any other of their descendants. They may be patrilateral or matrilateral ancestors or a combination of both lines. Thus a man might have as his *Yin* ancestors his father, father's father, father's father's mother, and her father, while his brother has their father, father's mother, and father's mother's father as his *Yin* ancestors. Of another pair of brothers, one's *Yin* ancestors may be their mother's father, maternal grandfather, and maternal great-grandfather; and the other's might be their mother's mother, her father, and his father (see Fig. 5, page 230).

Thus when a Talɔŋ says that his *Yin* and his eldest son's *Yin* are mutually dangerous, he is saying that his son's successful growth and development into and through manhood is a threat to his authority and primacy in the family, a symbol of the inevitable decline in his physical and mental power that comes with age, and a warning that he must in due course make way for the next generation; and yet it is also the

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crowning achievement of his life, the most significant sign that his *Yin* has prospered him (*maal*) well. The relations of father and son are a balance between their ties of solidarity and mutual identification, which form the central link of the lineage system, and the cleavage due to their belonging to successive generations. Once more we encounter the fundamental

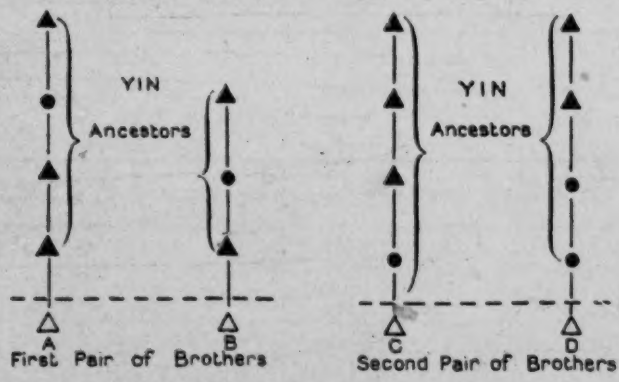

FIG. 5. *Yin* Ancestors.

principle of Tale social organization, that every constellation of social relationships is made up of a polar balance of ties and cleavages.

The Discrimination between Oldest Children and Youngest Children

The cleavage between father and first son obviously plays an important part in the cycle of development of the joint family and lineage. The oldest son's breakaway from the parental home is the first phase of fission of the joint family, and it is not until after his father's death that he and his brothers are likely to become reunited into a single domestic unit.

We have spoken sometimes as if the cleavage between successive generations lay solely between parents and their first-born children, at other times as if it were a gulf between parents and all their children. In practice, tension crops up between a parent and any of his or her adolescent or adult children, but one reason why it is always likely to be sharpest with oldest children is simply because they have gone farthest along the road of social and economic maturity and so symbolize the filial generation most effectively of all the children. Among non-Namoos it does not seem to matter whether the oldest children are first-born or merely the oldest surviving children. Among the Namoos, however, there is the striking peculiarity of their fixing the ritual and affective bar between the generations on the first-born children. If a man's first-born son is dead, and even if he died in infancy, the oldest living son does not assume the taboos of the first-born. The

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tension that develops between a father and his oldest surviving son is never as great as that which occurs between a man and his first-born son. An oldest surviving son may in time begin to farm on his own, but he will very often stay in his father's homestead, for his *Yin* is not a danger to his father's.

Tallensi have no explanation for this. Their only comment is to point to the fact, which can often be observed, that parents discriminate between their older children and their younger children, especially between the oldest and the youngest. Youngest children are the favourites, upon whom they lavish all their tenderness when they have long ceased to make a show of affection for the older children. A man's or a woman's last child (*bikpa'ar*) is the apple of its parent's eye. Tallensi say that a last child is always spoiled and pampered, and therefore grows up to be vain, lazy, and extravagant. Guna'ab was a man of this stamp, and his older brothers explained contemptuously that he had been their mother's *bikpa'ar* and they had been unable to discipline him after their father's death.

Tallensi say that a person's younger children, and in particular the youngest child, feel their dependence on their parents till the last. There is, as in so many aspects of the relations of parents and children, an element of reciprocity in this. For a man's youngest son, for instance, is still farming with him when his oldest son is farming either wholly or partly for himself—'thinking of how to feed his wife and children rather than of his parents', they often say. 'If I die to-day', men have said to me, 'do you think my oldest son will weep? Oh no; but my youngest son, he will shed bitter tears.' There is much truth in this. I have more than once seen a man's youngest son being harshly rated by an older brother for abandoning himself to grief over his father's death. Because older children no longer need their parents' care they do not inspire the same affection as young children. In the eyes of the natives, therefore, the discrimination between youngest and oldest children is a natural result of the process of upbringing. But I have heard women say, also, that a woman's love for her *bikpa'ar* is due to her seeing in him the sign of the end of her reproductive powers.

It is, however, not merely a matter of the vagaries of parental psychology. This discrimination runs deeply into the social structure of the Tallensi. A curious but enlightening indication of this occurs with divining (*bakologo*) shrines. When a diviner dies, the clairvoyant power associated with his shrine sometimes passes on to one of his sons by a process which the Tallensi think of as a kind of mystical contagion (*lɔŋ*). The son who is selected for this privilege is always a younger son. There is more sympathy between father and younger son than between father and oldest son. But the best indication of this is found at funeral ceremonies, where the oldest and the youngest children of the deceased have distinctive mourning duties. The oldest son and oldest daughter,

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as the chief mourners, have the most arduous mourning duties. They have to take part in almost every rite, both by day and by night, and these rites are mystically dangerous to those who participate in them. Hence they have to be carried out very carefully. All the participants must, for instance, observe absolute silence throughout these rites. The youngest son and youngest daughter, on the other hand, wear the *doolun* string as a special emblem of mourning. The *doolun* string is decorated with four cowrie shells for a dead mother and three cowrie shells if the deceased is the mourner's father. The youngest son wears it on his hand, looped about his middle finger in a prescribed fashion; the youngest daughter wears it round the neck and waist and down the back.

The most important of these rites are those which conclude the funeral. The rites differ in content from clan to clan, as we have mentioned in our earlier book,[1] but their symbolism is the same for all clans. Everywhere they symbolize the removal of the social personality of the deceased from the world of the living and his or her incorporation among the ancestors. They symbolize also the emancipation of the children from the control of their living parent and the assumption by the oldest son or daughter of the father's or mother's position in society. This is evident from the rites by which the customs, taboos, and articles which stood for the cleavage between the generations are ritually annulled or transferred to the son or daughter. In the case of a woman, among all the Tallensi, the principal rites are 'the sealing of the store-pot (*bea dok*)' and the sending of the *kumpiog*.

The rite of 'sealing the store-pot' is the only ritual act performed solely by women for a woman. On the last day but one of an old woman's funeral a group of old women, her co-wives, sisters-in-law, and friends, together with her daughters, gather in her sleeping-room. They take one of her large store-pots, put inside it a ladle, a dish, and other articles characteristic of women's activities that belonged to her, and solemnly seal it with a potsherd plastered over with mud and cow-dung. Beer and porridge are offered on the pot to her spirit. Her oldest daughter takes part in these rites, and then the pot is hidden in a place where she is not likely to see it. She may not come near it until it is finally disposed of. Next day the pot is ritually opened by the old women and the oldest daughter, who thus symbolically discards the taboo which she had to observe all her life if she is a first-born, or since her mother's death if she is not. Later the pot is removed from the house and taken by one of the old women. The daughter must never see it again.

At the end of the funeral ceremonies a dead woman's *kumpiog*, the special pot and calabash which stand for her social personality as a woman and mother, is solemnly and extremely carefully carried to her oldest daughter's house and given to her, as we have noted before.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. viii.

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For a man these final rites are more elaborate and variable. Among the Namoos the high-water mark of the rites is the induction of the first-born son and first-born daughter, if they survive, into those secret and forbidden things which they have avoided since infancy. The first-born son is dressed in his father's cap and smock, turned inside out.[1] A stick with a loop of string, and a piece of hollow bamboo, specially prepared for the occasion and symbolizing the father's bow and quiver, are hung round his neck. Then a procession is formed of all the children of the dead man, his first-born daughter following immediately behind the first-born son and holding on to the smock. An old man leads them round the homestead three times. Then the first-borns are taken inside through their dead father's *zɔŋ*, and are taken up to look into his granary for the first time in their lives. The whole rite is felt by the onlookers to be overwhelmingly solemn and the 'showing of the granary (*paal buur*)' is for them an intensely dramatic moment. A hush comes over the crowd of spectators as the son ascends to the granary and his mentor puts a hand behind his head and pushes it forward so that he peers into this hitherto-forbidden place. The son himself appears quite unperturbed, though this is one of the decisive moments of his life. I have been told by men who have been through this rite that they felt quite calm and collected at the time. But Tallensi are that way, and this is perhaps a sign of the efficacy of their ritual practices.

Among the Talis and other non-Namoos, the parallel rite is that of sending the quiver (*ta'ah loko*) of the dead man to the External *Bɔŋar*. When an old man dies, his quiver is hidden in his principal granary by one of the elders and his oldest son and daughter are thereafter forbidden to look into the granary until the end of the funeral ceremonies. 'If they did', a Yinduuri elder once explained to me, 'they would see the spirit of the dead man and die.' Younger sons and daughters are free to look into the granary. This is of particular interest as a parallel to the Namoo taboos; but with the Talis the ritual and affective expression of the tension between father and eldest son is concentrated in the period when its meaning is most significant to the son, the transition period between the extinction of his father's social personality and his assumption of his father's place. For the rite of 'sending the quiver', the 'quiver' (consisting of a real bow and a symbolical quiver exactly like that used by the Namoos) is taken from the granary by the oldest son. Followed by his father's senior surviving wife he is escorted by the clan elders to the External *Bɔŋar*. Sacrifices are made to the ancestors and especially to the dead man, who now belongs to the realm of the ancestors, and his 'quiver' is left in the *Bɔŋar* in token of his final departure from the world of the living.

We must conclude that the distinction Tallensi make, both in custom

[1] To distinguish the context of death from that of life and to symbolize the reversal of the taboo.

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593 578 and in sentiment, between oldest children and youngest children is of more than casual significance. It is as if the two major aspects of parent-child relations are split apart and distributed so as to make them more easily reconcilable. The mutual identification, mutual love and devotion of parents and children are focused in the relations of parents with their youngest children; the cleavage between successive generations is focused in the relations between parents and oldest children; and we can easily see why this is so. For it is the latter who will take the place of the parents on their death, who seem to be standing on the threshold waiting for them to die. The emphasis of the Namoos on first-born children is, as we have noted, due to the fact that it is the first-born child which makes a man and woman parents. Hence, if a first-born dies, its parents have to undergo a special purification rite; and a wife who has not borne a child to her husband does not undergo the purification rites for a widow when he dies. Later children do not change the role and status of a person in the same way; they do not make him or her more of a parent. Nor does the sex of the first-born matter, though the agnatic principle makes a first-born son of greater importance to a man than a first-born daughter. This and the principle of the equivalence of siblings explain why both sons and daughters are subject to the taboos of the first-born among the Namoos.

The Ancestors as Parent Images

593 769 578 577 The ambivalence in the relations of parents and children is more dramatically expressed in the ancestor cult than in any other aspect of Tale culture. We cannot discuss this at length here. We can only note that there is a direct continuity between the relations of parents and children in life and their relations after the parents' death. The worship of the ancestors is a culturally standardized projection on to the mystical plane of the tangle of attachments, reciprocities, tensions, and submerged antagonisms that bind parents and children to one another in life. Anyone unfamiliar with the speech and customs of the Tallensi would often find it impossible to tell, in some situations, whether a man is speaking of his living father or his dead father. The dead parents are the prototypes of all the ancestors. Distinctions of name and generation conceal the same primary images. This is clear from the fact that no man can sacrifice to an ancestor or ancestress except through the medium of the spirit of the parent who links him to that ancestor or ancestress.

It will not surprise the psychologist, however, to learn that the attributes with which the spirits of the parents are invested differ in some respects markedly from those that are conventionally assumed for living parents. The disciplinary limitations imposed by the demands of economic and social adjustment and by the rationale of reality are no longer operative. The figures of the dead parents are clothed in qualities that are in part highly magnified versions of their most praiseworthy qualities

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in real life and in part distorted reflections of the tensions that exist between parents and children in reality. It is no misrepresentation to describe them as a standardized and highly elaborated picture of the parents as they might appear to a young child in real life—mystically omnipotent, capricious, vindictive, and yet beneficent and long-suffering; but the emphasis is far more on the persecuting than on the protecting attributes. The distortion is most striking in the case of a mother's spirit. All ancestor spirits are apt to reveal themselves more often by the misfortune they inflict than by the benefits they bring. They emerge as sanctions of conduct more by reason of the punishments they bring down on wrongdoers than because of the benefits they confer for right doing. But the spirits of female ancestors are believed to be specially hard, cruel, and capricious. This is remarkable when we consider the love and devotion a mother shows for her child throughout his life. As we have observed elsewhere,[1] there is a never-ending struggle between a man and his ancestors. It is psychologically rooted in the relations of parents and children during the lifetime of the parents. Sacrifices and prayers are reminiscent of the principle of reciprocity in the real relations of parents and children. They contain the same elements of acquiescence, justice, and hidden coercion. They show another aspect, though, in the propitiation, reverence, and gratitude they often express.[2]

We can see why filial piety towards the dead parents is more strongly stressed than towards the living. While he is alive a person's father has direct jural and ritual authority over him; when he dies, the father becomes the paramount sanction of moral conduct for him; and this applies, *mutatis mutandis*, in only a lesser degree to the mother. The oath 'by my father and his goatskin (or sheepskin) and his three cowries' discussed in our previous book[3] is one proof of this. The centre of gravity of the whole social system of the Tallensi is the relationship of father and son, and it is the idea of filial piety that keeps this relationship in balance in the face of all the forces that tend to divide father and son. In this as in other respects the Tallensi are typical of patrilineal and patriarchal societies of simple culture from many parts of the globe, both ancient and modern.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 145.

[2] As death, among the Tallensi, is always believed to be mystically caused by a particular ancestor spirit or a group of ancestor spirits (material causes such as sickness being recognized as necessary but not sufficient without the mystical adjunct), it follows that a dead father or mother can kill (*ku*) his or her own child. The converse is impossible, since children, in life, have no jurisdiction over parents. I have asked Tallensi if patricide ever occurs or is known to have occurred. My most trusted informants said they had never heard of a case and thought the very idea abhorrent beyond measure. The idea of matricide they considered even more vile and unnatural.

[3] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 66.

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CHAPTER X

SIBLINGS IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Concept of 'mabiirət'

TALLENSI make a distinction between kinship that implies a difference of generation, summed up in the concept *dɔŋam*, and kinship that implies identity or equality of generation, summed up in the concept *mabiirət*.[1] *Mabii* (lit. mother's child) is the general term for a sibling of either sex and of any degree of consanguinity, and it is extended, as we have shown in our previous volume, to corporate groups, linked by patrilineal descent, that are of equal status. Its primary reference is to a sibling by the same parents as the speaker's when only the fact of siblingship is relevant—that is, when difference of age or sex is not relevant to the situation. Tallensi sometimes use the term in contrast with *babii* (lit. father's child), a usage that indicates very neatly the underlying implications of the term *mabii*. Thus Tallensi say that a man's *mabiis* have first claim on the inheritance of his widows, but that his *babiis* are also entitled to marry the widows. To the native this means that a man's brothers of the same *dug* have a stronger claim than his clansmen of other *dugət*—*dug* here being a lineage segment defined relatively to the agnatic distance between a particular suitor for a widow's hand and the deceased. A man of the same inner lineage as the deceased will call himself a *mabii* of the latter by contrast with another suitor of a different inner lineage but the same medial lineage; and the latter will call himself a *mabii* of the deceased by contrast with a more distant clansman, whom he will describe as a *babii*. Thus the use of the term *mabii* implies a relationship between the parties as if they were agnates who have a common progenitrix over and above their patrilineal ties. When a native describes another as his *mabii*, however distant their genealogical ties, he is tacitly implying a close personal element in their relationship for that moment and in that situation, as if they were children of the same parents, by contrast with a pair of distant agnates. A man will speak of a matrilateral relative of a different clan in this way in some situations. Thus a Tongo man, telling me the story of his first visit to Kumasi, related how he had stayed with a *mabii*, a Ba'ari man, who had loaned him the money for his lorry fare. Abroad, in Kumasi or Accra, a Talɔŋ speaks of any other Tallensi he meets there as his *mabiis* by contrast with all the foreigners amongst whom they live. And this is not merely a form of words. Abroad, Tallensi who have no ties of kinship or of locality, who would probably never have met or heard of each other at home, assist one another as if they were kinsmen.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vii, p. 117.

[p. 241]

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In the broadest sense, then, *mabiis* are cognates who are on terms of equality with one another and have a mutual interest in one another's welfare. In the narrowest and prototypical sense *mabiis* are siblings by the same parents. The emphasis is on their equality of status due to a common relationship with their parents.

The Equivalence of Siblings

The key to the social relations of siblings in Tale society and to the effects on the whole social structure of the sibling bond is the principle to which Radcliffe-Brown has given the name of 'the social equivalence of siblings'.[1] It is as true of the Tallensi as of the Australian aborigines that 'there is a very strong, intimate and permanent social bond between two brothers born and brought up in the same family', and that they 'occupy similar positions in the total social structure'. As we shall see, the latter proposition has to be translated into terms of the lineage organization to give it the appropriate connotation for the Tallensi. Siblings derive their social equivalence—that is, equivalence in jural, ritual, and economic relations, as opposed, for example, to private marital relations—from their common relationship with their parents. Outside the lineage range of strictly reckoned classificatory kinship, the recognition of siblingship implies not so much similar positions in the social structure as similar roles in certain situations due to membership of the same corporate groups, or, with matrilateral kin, to having common ascendants. We have, in fact, already had a good deal of evidence in preceding chapters of the social equivalence of siblings. We have seen also how the recognition of siblingship varies in significance according to the lineage context. What we wish to do now is to study the sibling relationship in its own right. By bringing the evidence together in a unitary picture we shall be able to see what constitutes the social equivalence of siblings. We shall find it useful for purposes of our analysis to distinguish between the solidarity of siblings and their equivalence.

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But before we examine the social equivalence of siblings more fully it is worth noting that there is, among the Tallensi, a correlated principle of social action of very wide application. Individuals who have the same social role or have had similar socially critical experiences are identified with one another whenever their role or these experiences come into a situation. The best instance is the case of co-wives who always speak of each other as sisters. All chiefs are regarded as 'brothers' (*mabiis*) because of their chiefship, so also are tendaanas. We have seen how men who have no father or mother alive are identified with one another at funeral ceremonies by the fact that only those who have undergone this social experience may take part in certain rites. Similarly only those who have themselves lost a wife or a husband may look after

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 'The Social Organization of Australian Tribes', Part 3, *Oceania*, I, 1930–1, pp. 428–9.

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the widow (or widower) during a funeral, or assist in the rites of purifying the widow or share her meals. Tallensi assert that a breach of this rule is impossible as no man or woman who had not had the experience would take charge of a widow. It is a taboo (*kihor*), and anyone who infringed it would die. Again, owners of diviners' shrines (*bakologo* shrines—the diviner is called *baya*) are identified in certain situations, though they do not form a corporate body of any sort. Thus when a new diviner's shrine is being set up for a man certain portions of the beer used in the rites can be drunk only by men who already have such shrines, and it is they who carry out the final rites by which the actual power of divination is conferred on him. Similarly it is only men who have themselves undergone the experience and the treatment who may assist in the ritual of purifying a homicide or a man who has slain a big game animal such as a bush cow. The list of illustrations could be extended, but this will suffice to show how deeply rooted the idea is. It is, however, only a determinant of individual conduct and sentiment, giving rise to *ad hoc* co-operation in certain situations, and not a principle of association in corporate units.

Factors modifying the Sibling Bond

The solidarity and social equivalence of siblings are conditioned by a number of factors. Differences of sex and, between like-sex siblings, of age are important. But distinctions of equal or even greater significance are imposed on siblings by the fundamental principles of the social structure. Siblingship does not cancel out the uniqueness of the individual, as symbolized in the notion of the *Yin*, and socially crystallized in the precise differentiation of the lineage segment which he or she founds. This factor, with its counterpart in the family structure and the economic organization of the household, is not important in childhood, but increases steadily in influence with the years. It is the basis of the fission between fraternal descent lines and, consequently, of the ramification of a lineage sprung from one progenitrix. How it works out, however, in a particular case depends upon the position of each person in terms of patrilineal descent and maternal origin. Thus the sibling relationship, while itself an important constitutive factor of the lineage structure, is reciprocally moulded by that structure. The relationship of brothers among the Tallensi might very well have been different from what it is if their social organization provided for the continuous merging of collateral lines of descent in lineal lines,[1] so that lineage branches springing from brothers were not specifically recognized, but only the inclusive trunk-line deriving from a distant ancestor.

[1] This appears to be the case with the Nuer at higher levels of lineage structure (*cf.* E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, Oxford, 1940, ch. v) and among some Southern Bantu tribes, such as the Zulu (cf. E. J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulu*, 1936).

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593 601 The influence of these modifying factors is recognized in the kinship terms used for the sibling relationship. Most of these have already been recorded, but it is convenient to bring them together again in this place. Within the limits of recognized generation differences, siblings never address one another by kinship terms, but always by name. Outside that range it is also not customary to address people by the kinship terms for siblings, in the ordinary way. When the terms are used it is either as a gesture of courtesy or half in jest, to single out a person from a group; or they are used in addressing distant clansmen or members of linked clans with whom one is not well acquainted. The usage conforms to the rule that kinship terms—other than those for mother (*ma*) and parent-in-law (*deema*)—are not as a rule used in addressing close relatives and are chiefly used towards distant relatives as a sign of special respect or courtesy. On the other hand, the terms for siblings are regularly used in referring to or making statements about brothers and sisters.

Tau (pl. *tap*) is the term for a sibling of opposite sex to the speaker or the subject of a statement. A man will say '*N-tau n-ɛl Ba'arɔ*—My sister is married to this place Ba'ari'; and a woman, '*N-yɛa n-tau yiri*—I am going to my brother's homestead.' The term *tau* has no age significance, as age differences do not affect the social relations of opposite sex siblings, but the suffixes *-kpeem* (senior) and *-bil* (junior) can be added for descriptive clarity.

An elder sibling of the same sex is *bier* (pl. *biernam*), a younger is *pit* (pl. *pirəba*).

A sibling by the same mother (whether or not the father is the same) is called *soog* (pl. *saarət*) without reference to sex or age; but sex and relative age can be indicated by combining *soog* with the preceding terms. Thus *tasoog* is a *soog* of the opposite sex; *bier-soog* is an older *soog* sibling of the same sex; *pit-soog* is a younger *soog* sibling of the same sex. These terms, as we have seen,[1] are extended to all uterine kin.

A sibling of different maternal origin is described by the term *sunzɔ* (pl. *sunzɔp*). Anyone who can be regarded as a sibling by the rules of classificatory kinship may be referred to thus, and the term is also used in corporate relations to denote co-ordinate lineage segments.[2] By itself *sunzɔ* may indicate a patrilineal sibling of either sex, but the suffixes *-pɔk* (female) and *-doog* (male) are often added to indicate the sex of the person referred to.

The Solidarity of 'soog' Siblings

593 The interplay of the various factors that mould the relations of siblings can best be understood by studying their genetic development. True siblings always grow up together in their natal family through the formative years of childhood, whether they remain together after adolescence or separate. Thus the mutual attachment and identity of

[1] Cf. Ch. II above.

[2] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xii, p. 201.

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interests of siblings, particularly of brothers, is built up on common upbringing and a common body of affective experience. In the older settlements the children of an expanded family, or even of a group of families based on a medial lineage, grow up together. Hence one finds, as has already been recorded,[1] that any member of an inner lineage knows the life-history of every other member.

This common background of siblings is illustrated in children's play-groups.[2] In the older settlements the play-groups of children under 8 or thereabouts rarely include children who belong to different medial lineages. It is the children of a group of adjacent homesteads, who are *ipso facto* members of the same inner or at most medial lineage, that form regular play-groups. Children of one sex of the same joint family or expanded family between whom there is not a wide age-gap always play together in the same group. Siblings of like sex learn together, and to an important extent from one another, the economic skills and practical knowledge they will need in order to get their livelihood. As nearly common a body of experience as is possible for separate individuals shapes their social personalities and directs their interests, ideals, and purposes towards culturally defined goals and values. In Tale society men or women of equal social maturity tend to think and feel alike in the same situation. Thus the similarity of character marking them out amongst their age-fellows which one very often observes in a pair of brothers or sisters is noteworthy,[3] the more so as differences of temperament and intelligence are not obliterated thereby. It is, indeed, just this uniformity of character that makes it difficult for some brothers and sisters to get on well with each other.

The ties of mutual attachment, loyalty, and solidarity in social matters that unite siblings are graded according to their genealogical closeness. They are closest for full (*soog*) siblings and progressively less close for those who have only a father in common, a paternal grandfather in common, a paternal great-grandfather in common, or more remote connexion.

These differences are laid down in earliest infancy. The intimacy and close mutual identification of full siblings is rooted in their common dependence on their mother in childhood. It is to her that they look for food and emotional security, and a mother's care is given to all her small children equally and in a group. In the hunger months if a woman gets hold of a little grain to cook some food for her children, she calls them all to eat of it and they all sit down together around the dish. The first lessons in sharing equally are learnt in this setting. The 6-year-

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 210.

[2] I have given a short description of these play-groups in my '*Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*', previously cited.

[3] The processes of education that lie behind the formation of social personality among the Tallensi are more fully discussed in the paper just cited.

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593 old, admonished sometimes by his mother, tries not to eat too greedily lest his 2-year-old brother or sister eating with him should not have his fill. The 11- or 12-year-old, copying his parents, will take a mouthful or two and then say he has had enough, leaving the dish to be finished by his younger siblings. Thus are the seeds of the concern for each other's welfare commonly found between full siblings planted through the precept and example of the mother.

593 857 As we have seen, children sleep with their mother in infancy and early childhood. The feeling of emotional security this gives to a child thus becomes associated with his maternal siblings. Tarəmba, aged about 9, was playing with his usual companions of about the same age—four other boys and a little girl. All but one of these children came from the same expanded family. I stopped to chat to them. After a while we got on to the subject of parents. Yindubil said he preferred his father to his mother. Tarəmba interrupted, exclaiming, 'Hee! he 's telling fibs. It 's only because his mother has run away. My mother is dead and so I can't help it, I've got to like my father best. But if you have a mother it 's different. She is the one who gives you food; and when night comes you sleep beside her, and you don't have bad dreams. If [928] you sleep alone you have bad dreams.' For a Talən sleeping badly or having bad dreams is the arch symptom of a state of anxiety. Tarəmba's wistful remarks sum up vividly what a mother means to a Talən as the focus of his sense of security, and this affect adheres to a full sibling. It forms a strong motive in the reluctance of full brothers to part and set up separate households or separate homesteads. Təbəg and Dəbil were full brothers (*saarət*), both middle-aged men with adult children. They lived together and farmed together in great amity. I knew them well and had occasion more than once to discuss with them one of my stock subjects, why *soog* brothers do not, like half-brothers, separate when their families start growing up. 'No', they said, 'thus it is pleasant (*ɣwala m-mah*). Being together thus we help each other. We two sitting here, are we not the children of one mother? He and I, we come from one vulva (*ti yi la pɛn yɛnni na*).' This is the standard explanation given for the lifelong partnership of *soog* brothers.

Soog siblings are generally devoted to each other and always, as far as my observation goes, unquestioningly loyal to each other in relation to other people. One sees this very clearly in the behaviour of young children. Babies and infants are often left by their mothers in the care of older children. A woman may ask one of her co-wives' children to keep an eye on her infant for a little while, but it is not usual for an infant to be left for hours on end, or a whole day, in the care of a half-sibling. So if one sees an infant being carried about by a young girl of 10 or 11 one can be fairly certain that they are either full siblings or that the little nursemaid is the infant's mother's classificatory 'sister' or 'child', whom she has specially brought to live with her

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as nursemaid to the baby. If one sees a boy taking care of an infant one can be certain that the children are *saarət*. A boy will gladly keep an eye on a baby half-brother or half-sister for an hour or so, but he will refuse to take care of the baby for a longer period. Not so with his *soog* sibling. Boys delight in carrying their infant *saarət* about or having them with them in the same play-group. All children are very patient and affectionate with younger *saarət*. A homely sight is that of a little boy or girl of about 6 or 7 kneeling beside a baby sibling on the ground and caressing its face with slightly parted lips.

Tale children often squabble among themselves, with that mixture of earnestness and fantasy that runs through so many of their group activities; but I have never seen a child trying maliciously to hurt another. Between siblings, especially full siblings near to each other in age, squabbling is regarded as a normal habit. It is one of the signs of their equality and familiarity. So one sometimes sees a little boy or girl of 3 or 4 angrily pummelling a sibling of 7 or 8 and the older child playfully warding off the childish blows. Or one sees an infant howling in rage for something and his elder brother or sister patiently soothing him. Yindubil, aged about 8, whose mother had run away, was being brought up by his father's younger wife. Her little son, Məyar-pu-la'at, aged about 4, was very fond of Yindubil and followed him about wherever he went. Said Yindubil, of his half-brother, with a grin, 'He 's quarrelsome, always wants to scrap with me. But I don't mind; he 's my *soog*[1] and besides he 's not greedy. If our mother prepares some food for us he always waits for me to come and join him.' Passing Bayankura's homestead one morning I found his children standing about in front of the gateway. As I came up, the youngest, a boy of about 3, ran to his brother, a lad of 11 or 12, and clung to him. Their half-sister, aged about 9, laughed and said to me: 'He (the infant) is afraid of you, so he runs to his *soog*.' I asked, 'Why didn't he run to you?'—for a small child runs to its mother or older sister more readily than to a brother or its father for protection. 'Oh', she replied, 'he likes his *soog* better than me.' I asked Kyekambe, aged about 11 or 12, whom he liked best, his small *soog* brother Badiwona, aged about 6, or his half-brothers who were his constant playmates. 'Badiwona', he said emphatically, 'we are one mother's children, and some day, when I move out to farm on my own, he will come with me, the others won't.' Similarly, Maɛŋya, aged about 12, and his *soog*-brother Tɛndaanbon, aged about 8, were inseparable. They helped each other to hoe their respective ground-nut plots and always went about together. They ate together regularly out of the same dish; they went on errands together.

[1] Not in the strict sense, of course. But this is a very good example of how being brought up by the same 'mother' creates sentiments of attachment similar to those of true *saarət*. I came across several instances of this.

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Once a smaller boy who was with them hit Maŋŋa. Maŋŋa turned furiously on the small boy; but it was somewhat comical to see Tɛn-daanbon equally angry with the assailant. Like many full or half-siblings of about the same age and the same sex, these two boys were extraordinarily alike in character, modelling themselves obviously on their father. They had his blunt and honest habits of speech, his diligence and readiness to oblige, and a sense of responsibility beyond their years.

Until one of them reaches the age of about 9 or 10, and sometimes even after that age, *soog* siblings are frequently together irrespective of sex. That is why one often sees a little girl with a group of small boys, or a little boy with a group of small girls. Between the ages of about 9 and 12 the sexual dichotomy prevailing in Tale culture begins to have a strong influence on the children, as we have seen. Different economic activities divide boys and girls. One rarely finds girls accompanying the herd boys or boys going for firewood with their mothers and sisters. Boys are beginning to share the interests and activities of the men, girls those of the women. Boys go about with their 'mates' (*taab*, sing. *taraan*) or 'chums' (*dɔlɔntaas*, sing. *dɔlɔntaa*) of about the same age, and girls with their girl chums. Boys of 11 and 12 are apt to be rather scornful of girls, and girls of this age turn up their noses at their boy contemporaries. Overtly, their attitudes to one another remind one of the latency phase in European children. Children round about 11 to 13 do not play together much in groups except on special occasions. Girls, in particular, are at home a good deal.

This is the time, therefore, when the sex factor begins to exercise a strong influence on the relations of siblings; age differences also become significant; and with this emerges a distinction between the social aspect of siblingship and the affective, personal aspect. A boy of 11 to 13 may make a boon companion of a half-brother or a classificatory brother from a neighbouring homestead of about his own age, leaving his younger *soog* brother or sister to his or her own devices if the difference between them is considerable. When Koyatee came to see me it was always with one of his chums who belonged to a different branch of his medial lineage, never with his younger *soog* brother or sister.

It is the same with girls at this stage. Ba'anzee's best friend was her classificatory 'daughter' of about her own age from the next homestead. They used to come up to the camp to call on my wife, as they generally announced to me, their arms affectionately round each other's neck. Maanyeya's daily playmate was her classificatory sister of about the same age from a neighbouring homestead—until her mother had a baby who wholly absorbed Maanyeya's delighted attention.

This tendency to seek outside friendships, though still chiefly among siblings of the same inner lineage, increases with the approach of adolescence. From the age of about 14 to 16 up to about 18 to 20 many

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boys are keenly learning the art of courtship and are experimenting with sex. They have sweethearts (*gab*, pl. *gabnam*), most commonly slightly younger girls of the same clan whom they call 'sisters' in the widest sense. These girls may have serious suitors from other clans, but not being quite ripe for marriage find much more pleasure and excitement in their freer relations with their clan 'brothers'. With them they can indulge in sexual play, not always stopping short of intercourse, without criticism. Now when boys go to visit their sweethearts they often like to have the company of a friend (*zɔ*, pl. *zɔnam*) of about the same age, who has a similar interest in such adventures. For this a boy prefers a friend from another homestead, a not too near classificatory brother, to a close brother. Later on such a pair of friends will help each other in serious courtship, for one cannot carry on a serious courtship without a friend to act as spokesman and go-between. And a distant brother is preferable to a close brother as a friend in affairs of the heart. It helps to keep them secret from the other members of one's family, and that is desirable because it is a point of honour with every young man to find a wife for himself. The same motives operate with girls between the ages of about 13 and marriage at 16 to 18 years of age. A girl likes going to market with a girl friend of about her own age who is equally interested in the young men around. But if a girl is thinking of eloping with a suitor she prefers to confide in her mother or her clan-brother sweetheart. Having no rights in the bride-price they will—for a bribe from the suitor—help her to get away, whereas her own brothers will insist on a marriage by arrangement so as to make sure of the bride-price.

But the divergence of interests and companionship in the years immediately preceding and following adolescence does not disturb the personal intimacy and attachment of *soog* siblings. Custom prescribes that husband and wife should eat separately. So a man eats with one or two of his younger children, and each of his wives eats with one of her younger daughters or an infant. The other children are divided up, one dish of porridge to this pair of boys or that pair of girls or even to a girl and a boy. They may be full siblings or half-siblings, and the porridge they are eating on a particular occasion may be of their mother's co-wife's cooking. Nevertheless, every child continues to think of his own mother as the food-giver and of his *saarət* as those with whom he automatically shares food. A boy of 12 does not sleep in his mother's room, yet he still regards her as the source of his sense of emotional security. In a small and harmonious polygynous family the children are almost equally at home in all the women's quarters, but in a large joint family the children of one woman tend to be in her quarters for most of the time that they are indoors.

Of many other signs of the lasting intimacy of full siblings and their closer identification with each other than with their half-siblings, the

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593 578 best is this. A 12-year-old is conscious of his seniority (*kpɛmɔt*) in relation to his younger siblings. He orders them about and pulls them up if they are not behaving properly. But whereas he would not hesitate for a moment to smack a younger *soog*, he will not go further than scolding a younger half-sibling for the same offence. Tallensi say that if you strike your younger *soog* it does not matter; your mother or your father may rebuke you afterwards and the affair is forgotten. But if you strike a half-sibling—even if the child has behaved so disgracefully that public opinion will be on your side—you cause friction in the family. The child's mother gets annoyed with you and with your mother and quarrels arise.

593 835 There is another interesting indication of this. As has been previously mentioned, Tallensi do not designate incest between brother and sister as sinful. When they say it is forbidden (*kih*), as they sometimes do, they mean it rather in the sense that it is disgraceful, scandalous, and unnatural than in the narrower ritual sense. If they are asked why then it is so uncommon, considering the many opportunities and temptations that surely offer, they explain it by the intimacy of siblings in childhood and adolescence. They deny that the temptation exists. 'Look', said Sinkawol, arguing this point with me, 'my sister, is she not marriageable? And here am I, however attractive she is, I do not even notice it; I am never aware that she has a vagina; she is just my sister and someone will one day come and marry her and I will give her to him and get my cows. You and your sister grow up together, you quarrel and make it up, how can you desire to have intercourse with her?' This is a stock argument with the Tallensi.

593 864 At the same time the natives are the first to point out that sexual play in childhood generally begins with a classificatory sibling. Family play is a regular thing in the under-8 play-groups; and the final realistic touch is for the 'husband' and 'wife' to pretend to have coitus. This is common knowledge, and adults laugh at it. A standing joke is to tease a small boy about his so-called sweethearts. As we have seen, Tallensi say that small children 'have no sense (*ka yam*)', and therefore it is not a breach of propriety or morals for them to play at coitus with a sibling. Every man I questioned on the subject told me, with a grin of amusement, that his first sweetheart was a 'sister', sometimes of the same expanded family, more often of the same inner or medial lineage. 'We were very small and didn't know better', they said.

But Tallensi maintain stoutly that even small boys of 6 or 7 do not play at coitus with their *soog* sisters or half-sisters. There are exceptions, of course, they readily admit. There are stupid children, precocious children, and badly brought up children. Among such children instances of brothers copulating with sisters are bound to occur. It has been known to happen even with adolescents, who are presumed to 'have sense'. If it is found out, the culprits are given a severe thrashing

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and are taunted for months afterwards by their fellows. But these are not the reasons why children so rarely commit this impropriety. It is because of the intimacy, the closeness to each other in daily life, of brother and sister. Children do not need to be told that it is wrong to copulate with a sibling of the same joint family; they know it themselves. And, in fact, children from the age of 6 or 7 and upwards always say, with an expression of disgust, that sexual play with one's own siblings is wrong. Moreover, though they are not taught it as an avoidance, they are well aware of the conventional attitudes on the subject from listening to adult conversation.[1]

Incidentally, there are no taboos on conversation on sex matters among the Tallensi. Men, women, and children are all outspoken about sexual matters, though young women are apt to use euphemisms and to talk more circumspectly than men. Some men also say that it is embarrassing to talk about sexual subjects in front of young wives or female relatives-in-law. But no native hesitates to discuss these subjects in the presence of his sister.

These ties of mutual affection and devotion between *soog* siblings last throughout life and are extended to their children too. One sees this most dramatically in the grief people show, and especially women, over the death of a *soog* sibling. Tallensi say that very often the loss of a full brother is a greater shock to a woman than the death of her husband. A husband is replaceable, a full brother not, they add. When Kpe'emi died his wife fainted and afterwards sat about disconsolately, weeping at intervals for days. His *soog* sister also fainted, but, the men said, it had been much more difficult to revive her than her sister-in-law and she became ill with grief. Seeing the two young women together one could not doubt that it was the sister who felt the blow worst.

Another vivid demonstration of the strength of this tie between full siblings occurred when Tendaan Teroog performed the succession ceremony on succeeding to the custody of his maximal lineage *bəyar*. A large crowd had gathered, chiefly men—clansmen, and neighbours and matrilateral kinsmen of Teroog's maximal lineage. Amongst them my

[1] The psychological undercurrents of these conventional attitudes do not concern us here, but it may be remarked that there is probably a strong and partly overt sexual component in the affective relations of brother and sister. I was struck by this when I once had an opportunity of observing the behaviour of Yamzooya (aged about 11) and his *soog* sister (aged about 8) who were playing together in a corner of the room where I was chatting to their father. The children, who were quite naked, stood embracing each other, the boy with his legs round his sister's, and they twisted and wriggled about as if they were engaged in a mixture of an orgiastic dance and a wrestling-match. They were both in a state of high excitement, panting and giggling and muttering to each other, with obvious sexual pleasure. They seemed to be oblivious of their surroundings. This game went on for about twenty minutes after which they separated and lolled back as if exhausted. These two children were most attached to each other.

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eye was caught by an old woman who seemed to be particularly privileged, as she walked about giving orders, and greeting the guests. I was not surprised to learn that she was Teroog's only surviving full sister (*tasoog*). He presented her to me with great pride, holding her hand affectionately. She sat beside him throughout the rites, listening intently to his long invocation to their ancestors, prompting him once or twice, and helping him as if she and he were jointly succeeding to the ownership of the *bɔyar*. One could see that the notion that any woman might well have been in her brother's place in the social system if it were not for an accident of birth has a very concrete meaning to the Tallensi.

Full (*soog*) siblings, as we have already related, constantly visit one another, bringing and taking away gifts. When a woman has a baby, her full sister hastens to her with a bundle of firewood or a dish of soup ingredients. If a person falls ill, his full siblings come running to see him. When Kuur fell and broke his ankle there was consternation among his immediate relatives. Two of his half-brothers rushed off at once to consult a diviner about the accident—no laughing matter, as they well realized, for a man in the fifties—while his full sister stayed behind to nurse him. His wife hovered about helplessly, only approaching him when his sister called for some more hot water. The sister came to him every day for the next week or so and was his most devoted nurse.

We have described before, also, how full brothers generally hold together, economically and residentially, longer than half-brothers and often throughout their lives. This is due, basically, to their close identification with and attachment to each other. One constantly comes across examples of this. Samane was the Chief of Tongo's right-hand man and probably the only person who had the chief's absolute trust. Why, I once asked Samane, did the chief not put the same trust in his own son Saa? 'Don't you see', said Samane, 'the chief and I are born of one father and one mother. We are as one. He will have no secrets from me or I from him. A man's brother is more to him than his son. Saa wouldn't care[1] if the chief died and he succeeded. I want my brother to live, for his being chief is just as if I were chief myself.' Again, one of the very few cases I knew of men working abroad sending home regular remittances of money was Sɔyar's policeman brother. When I praised him, Sɔyar said, as if in explanation, 'He is my *soog*'.

This comes out very clearly, too, in the property relations of full brothers. Men of the same joint family borrow one another's clothes freely, though the individual ownership of the clothes is never in doubt and the owner's permission is always necessary. But full brothers behave almost as if their clothes were their common property. Hence when a man dies his full brother often takes some of his clothes, instead of leaving all to his sons. There is also a specific ritual sanction in this relationship, the common subjection of full brothers to their mother's

[1] He was the chief's first-born son. Cf. p. 225 above.

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spirit, perpetuating, on the religious plane, their common dependence on her in her lifetime.

It must not be thought, however, that friction between full siblings never occurs. That would be contrary to human nature, the natives often declare. As amongst most peoples, sibling solidarity conceals a strong element of rivalry. Indeed there is one circumstance in which it is taken for granted that *soog* siblings will be prone to quarrel all their lives, even if they do not set up separate homesteads. Two successive children of the same mother and father are regarded as born rivals. The second of the two children, irrespective of sex, is called the *nyeer* of the first. The first *nye* (verb = immediately precedes) the second, who *tayal* (verb = immediately follows) the first in birth order. The definition applies strictly to birth sequence, not to survival order. A child is not its older *soog* sibling's *nyeer* if between them their mother had another child who died in infancy, or a miscarriage—for a miscarriage counts as a birth. The concept *nyeer* is regularly used to indicate an infant's degree of maturity. An infant that has a *nyeer*, or is old enough to have a *nyeer*, is entering the second conventionally recognized stage of social development, childhood proper. So if a native is asked about the stage of development reached by a particular child and says, 'It has a *nyeer* (*u mar nyeer*)' or 'It is fit to have a *nyeer* (*u saya nyeer marəga*)', one can infer that the child is between 3 and 5 years old—or, to keep to native categories of thought, that it is weaned, no longer needs the constant care of its mother or a nursemaid, and is beginning to fend for itself, to join in children's play-groups, and to become acquainted with the world outside the homestead walls.

A child and its *nyeer* are believed to be rivals almost from the day the *nyeer* is born. This predisposes them to be ill tempered with each other and wrangle on the most trivial provocation. Often when I have noticed two children bickering or annoying each other in some petty way, my companion—a man or an older child perhaps—has said with a laugh, 'There 's someone and his *nyeer* (*nit ni u nyeer nla*)'. Once at a funeral ceremony there was an argument between the two sons of the dead man. It ended with the older giving the younger a buffet across the mouth that drew blood. Relatives intervened and separated them. Then an old woman, their father's *soog* sister, with mingled pleading, protests, and sighs, dragged the younger brother away to attend to his cut lip. He was weeping with injured pride and humiliation, exclaiming, 'If he were not my older brother (*bier*) I would kill him'. The people sitting around commented scathingly on this shameless spectacle. Then someone remarked, 'Oh well, it 's a case of a man and his *nyeer*'. It had all begun, I learnt, from the younger lad's accusing the older of having appropriated something belonging to him and the older losing his temper with him for fussing about ridiculous trifles on such a solemn day.

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593 578 If a person is ill tempered or unnecessarily sharp with him, or appears to dislike him, a Talən retorts with 'Why do you dislike me? Am I your *nyeer*, or what? (*I yaagəm bo? Man a i nyeer bɛ?*)' This formula is always spoken half-mockingly; for the rivalry of successive children, though assumed to be in the very nature of their relationship, is not taken too seriously. It is not, like the underlying rivalry of father and first-born son, subject to ritual sanctions. It is simply an acute expression of the familiarity and equality of siblings and does not destroy their solidarity.[1] Tallensi themselves say that successive siblings often get on together admirably and stand together as staunchly as any other full siblings. I have never heard it said that *soog* brothers are quicker to set up separate households if they are successive siblings than if they are not.

578 593 595 Tale custom recognizes the rivalry of successive siblings in a number of other ways. Thus successive siblings (this applies chiefly to brothers) may not be buried in the same grave. If they are, their spirits will be continually quarrelling and persecuting their descendants until they are exhumed and separated. Again, successive sisters may not be married to the same man or even to the same clan. But this rule is, to my own knowledge, often broken. If they do happen to be married into the same clan the sisters must avoid being pregnant at the same time or, if they are, they must not see each other during their pregnancy. If they do one or both will miscarry. Here it is belief rather than practice that is a sign of the rivalry of successive siblings. Tallensi object to having two sisters married to the same man for prudential reasons. They say that it is obviously more difficult to get eight cows out of one man in payment of bride-price than it is to get four cows. Nevertheless it does sometimes occur. A well-to-do son-in-law who has his father-in-law's esteem can often persuade the old man to give him another daughter to wife. If the girls are successive siblings, a very [789] simple magical rite involving the burying of a hoe at the entrance of the husband's homestead serves to 'cut' their *nyeer* relationship.[2]

[1] I do not know whether successive siblings quarrel more often than non-successive siblings. Tallensi say they do. Knowing the Tallensi, I have no doubt that conventional expectation itself acts as a stimulus to petty wrangling between successive siblings. Every time they have a disagreement not only onlookers but they themselves put the conventional interpretation on the situation, and this is bound to make them more touchy in relation to each other than to other siblings. In every aspect of Tale social life cultural definitions and expectations direct behaviour in this way. On the other hand, I knew several pairs of successive siblings who got on extremely well together and to all appearances never said a cross word to each other. Tallensi admit that this is quite common and explain it by the invariable stock phrase 'It 's all a matter of character'.

828 [2] A question that immediately suggests itself is, whence does the rivalry of successive siblings arise? I have put this question to many Tallensi. The usual answer is in terms of the cliché that 'it is in the nature of things (*de yɛl nla*)'.

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To return to our main subject, squabbles between children, whether they are successive siblings or not, are laughed away. When adult brothers and sisters quarrel it is taken more seriously. The irresponsibility—as the men view it—of women in marriage often leads to family quarrels. A woman who runs away from a husband to whom she has been given, or obstinately returns to one from whom she has been taken, arouses her father's and her brothers' anger. There may be a temporary estrangement between them. But in the end they usually become reconciled again. If she does not give in, her father or brothers do. 'They have no alternative but to give in (*ba kɔŋ ka diegɔra*)', the natives say. Before that happens, however, there may be a father's curse on the girl and hard words spoken to her and her husband by her brothers.

Adult *soog* brothers also fall out at times, but in contrast to disputes between half-brothers this seems very rarely to become either the pretext or the stimulus to their deciding to separate. Tallensi ascribe it to peculiarities of personality. The very fact that full brothers are often alike in character may be the cause of friction between them. To give one or two illustrations, there was the case of Zaŋ and his older *soog* brother Pumaan. They were both inclined to be solitary, egocentric, excessively touchy about their status, and suspicious of others. The strong competitive streak in them inevitably coloured their relations. So Zaŋ often complained that he found Pumaan's authority irksome. But there was never, as far as I could discover, an open quarrel between

But one or two more thoughtful informants appeared to have an inkling of the deeper sources of this peculiarity. They connected it with the fact that the older sibling is 'set aside' or 'left to itself (*bah*)' by the mother when she becomes pregnant with its *nyeer*. That is to say, the child's physical weaning is completed and simultaneously its affective attachment to its mother—a very possessive attachment with unweaned Tale babies—is brought to an end. A *nyeer* dispossesses its immediately preceding sibling of their mother's undivided care and devotion in both the physical and the psychological sense. This is a fact of observation and one which has a direct influence on family life. As we know, Tallensi maintain that it is very difficult for a woman to take care of two unweaned infants, hence the prohibition against a woman's becoming pregnant again before her infant is old enough to do without her undivided attention. When this custom is broken, so that a premature pregnancy follows, the parents are said to *nye* their child. As this term, cognate with *nyeer*, suggests, and conventional opinion confirms, a premature *nyeer* is believed to endanger a child's life. On the analogy of what is known to happen in our society, it can be surmised that the open acknowledgement of rivalry between successive siblings is a culturally standardized safety-valve for the jealousy and resentment the older sibling has against the younger for robbing him of their mother's attention. This explains also why successive birth order is the significant feature and not survival order. The older child's resentment will be directed only against its immediately next-born sibling, the one on whose account it was 'set aside', whether that sibling lives or not. It is possible, moreover, that open acknowledgement of the rivalry of successive siblings prevents it from turning into a disruptive element in the relations of siblings.

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them, and Zaŋ stood unswervingly by Pumaan, when the latter took sides against the head of their own medial lineage in the dispute over the succession to the clan *bɔyar*. Nindɔyat and Yintee, who, unlike Zaŋ and Pumaan, still farmed together, were cast in the same mould. Both were notorious for their instability and aggressiveness. They were known to quarrel frequently and on at least one occasion came to blows. But no one could have been more loyal to Nindɔyat than Yintee, in particular where the possessions of the family were concerned.

In short, though *soog* siblings come into conflict at times it does not undermine their solidarity. The reason for this is obvious. The crux of the sibling relationship lies in its social definition. Personal qualities may modify its content in particular cases; they cannot break up its structure; and this holds for every degree of sibling relationship. In the case of *soog* siblings the infrangible core is the relation of uterine siblings to and through their mother, as members of the matricentral *dug* in contraposition to the patricentral *yir*, first in the joint family and later in the lineage. The significance of this factor, the notion of maternal origin, can be judged from the relations of *soog* brothers who have different fathers. They may have no common economic interests and may grow up separately, after the early years of childhood. But they have very firm ties of affection and mutual loyalty, which are often expressed through mutual economic aid. Sie and Da'amo'o were *soog* brothers thus related, their mother having first been married to Sie's father and after his death to Da'amo'o's father, who belonged to a different medial lineage of the clan. Sie was the older of the two by ten or fifteen years. Whenever he was in trouble over something Da'amo'o went to seek Sie's advice rather than his proxy father's. This principle, as we have noted before, is of general validity in Tale social structure. It appears in the stronger cohesion and amity always found between individuals and lineages whose progenitors were *saarət* than between those who are only patrilineally connected. Nena'ab and Ɔndieso remained great friends in spite of the long-standing quarrel between their two inner lineages, because their mothers were full sisters. At the level of maximal lineage organization, Seug is a much more closely knit section of Tongo than the other three sections, because the founding ancestors of the two major segments of Seug were sons of one mother.[1]

Solidarity and Equality among sunzɔ Siblings

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But the critical importance of the idea of their common parentage, bilaterally or unilaterally, in the relations of siblings is best shown in the differences between the relations of *soog* siblings and those of half-siblings and other paternal siblings (*sunzɔp*). Tallensi tend to draw a line between *soog* siblings and all other sibling relatives within the same nuclear lineage or inner lineage. Thus half-siblings (i.e. children of

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xii, p. 213.

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the same father by different mothers) and ortho-cousins (father's brothers' children) are all lumped together as *sunzɔp* of close degree, referred to by sibling terms. Though the exact degree of patrilineal kinship between a pair of siblings has a direct effect on their mutual and common interests and on their place in the family structure, Tallensi tend to feel the same way towards an ortho-cousin as towards a half-sibling. This is natural since brothers' children often grow up together in the same domestic family.

The social and personal relations of *sunzɔp* siblings of the same nuclear lineage are identical in pattern with those of *soog* siblings. But they differ, markedly at times, in degree; for the affective as well as social relations of siblings are a function of their genealogical distance from one another, and in particular of the cleavages fixed by differences of maternal parentage.

Many indications of this have been given in previous chapters and in the preceding paragraphs, for one cannot isolate the relations of *soog* siblings from the total context of family relations or from the total field of sibling relations. Having different mothers or different fathers creates significant differences in the social relations and personal intercourse of children with their parents and with each other. It stamps the child's experience of the common domestic environment and family history uniquely for himself and his full siblings. The structural correlate of this, as we have shown in an earlier chapter, is the distinctive field of cognatic kinship which goes with different maternal origin. Hence his social position in relation to his siblings is directly reflected in his sentiments and attitudes towards them. Differentiation in the field of genealogical ties carries with it differentiation of status, rights, and duties, and this has an immediate counterpart in affective behaviour. Thus, whereas it is assumed that full brothers will remain together for most of their lives, half-brothers are expected to separate in due course; and whereas discord between *soog* brothers is felt to require explanation by reference to personal idiosyncrasies, what is felt to call for such explanation in the case of half-brothers is their adhering to each other when most people would expect them to separate. 'It is only because we are on such good terms that Barimoda (his younger half-brother) still shares the homestead with me', said Naabdiya, when he was describing the organization of his domestic family.

In childhood and adolescence paternal siblings may be the greatest comrades in play and work. The affective cleavage between them comes out chiefly in the domestic circle—when they go off at night to sleep in their respective mothers' quarters; when they seek the solace of their own mothers in sickness or distress; when an older sibling merely scolds his younger *sunzɔ* for a fault for which he would have smacked his *soog*; and so forth. The relations of *sunzɔ* siblings are strongly coloured by the social and personal relations of their mothers. *Sunzɔ*

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593 siblings whose mothers are or were classificatory or clan sisters have stronger bonds than those whose mothers were not kin. Such ties, intersecting those of patrilineal kinship, are very common. The children of a woman and her *pɔŋasoog*[1] (a 'sister' or other kinswoman she brings into the family as a child to look after her baby, and who later marries her husband or another man of the family) feel almost as close to each other as if they were full sisters' children. Most common, however, are cases such as that of Naabdiya and Barimoda, who trace their long-lasting amicable association back to the excellent personal relations of their mothers.

After adolescence, with the attainment of greater economic responsibility, the cleavage between *sunzɔ* siblings becomes more apparent, though it is still largely masked by membership of the same domestic and economic unit. Paternal control and the common needs of the unit hold their divergent interests in check. Sex differences become significant in the same way as with *soog* siblings; but brothers are usually partners in work and often comrades in leisure.

593 865 At this time the pattern of their future relations emerges clearly. Its keynote is a free-and-easy comradeship on terms of equality. Differences of age, formally recognized in the terminology of kinship and socially significant as they are in the distribution of authority, rights, and duties, hardly influence the personal relations of brothers in young manhood, or even later. No Taləŋ, man, woman, or child, will submit to arbitrary authority without resistance. If any demand made on another person in virtue of superiority of generation, age, or sex is felt to be unreasonable or unjust it will be resisted. Quite small children, obedient as they are, jib at commands from parents or older siblings if they think them unreasonable or unfair.

593 This attitude is particularly strong among siblings. The basis of their social and personal relationships is the principle of sharing (*tɔt*). This principle underlies the social relations of siblings of any degree as well as of corporate units whose relative standing is assimilated to those of siblings, such as co-ordinate lineage segments. As we have noted earlier, it is one of the chief contrasts between the relations of father and son and those of brother and brother. It is summed up in the maxim: 'A man and his father do not share; a man and his brother share (*Nit ni u ba pu tɔta; nit ni u mabiig ntɔt*).'

593 428 423 As will be recollected, this maxim is most clearly illustrated in the rules of inheritance. Brothers are coheirs, even though the effective management of the lands and chattels they inherit from their father is vested in the oldest of them at any given time. Hence if a man has only 'sons' to consider in dealing with property that has come to him by inheritance from his father or brother, he is in theory free to dispose of it as he pleases. But if he is merely the oldest of a group of brothers

[1] Cf. Ch. IV. above.

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inheriting from their father he will be effectively restrained by his brothers. This rule is constantly met with in discussions of the pledging of property or the sale of land or cattle. Naabdiya summed up these rules very well in reference to the various farms held by the members of his inner lineage of Kunduzoor biis. First there was the home farm originally inherited and left intact by Kunduzoor at the time of his death, now owned by the last of his and his brothers' sons, Na'am. Na'am could, if he wished, sell some or all of this land, since on his death it will pass to men whom he calls 'sons'. 'We (the sons) could protest but we could not restrain him', said Naabdiya, 'but Kunduzoor (i.e. his spirit) would be angry and would slay Na'am.' Then there was some land Kunduzoor had himself acquired and left intact, heritable only by his direct descendants. The largest part of this was now owned by Na'ampa'ahya, the oldest of his true grandsons. 'He cannot sell this land', said Naabdiya; 'we, his brothers (who will inherit after him) could restrain him. In the old days we should not hesitate to draw arrows in order to do so, but now we would drag him to the chief, who would forbid the sale.'

The records of land sales in the past which I collected at Tongo amply confirm Naabdiya's statement. When Na'ampa'ahya inherited this land from the last of Kunduzoor's own sons it was as oldest of a group of brothers. So he had to 'cut off (*yma*)' portions of it for his other brothers. These distributed portions are normally re-amalgamated with the main block of patrimonial land as the brothers inherit from one another and add their portions to the main block. But if friction develops between brothers over a serious issue, it may result in one of them refusing to let his portion revert to the patrimonial land. Such a case occurred in Naabdiya's inner lineage in his father's time. One of Kunduzoor's sons, having become his father's heir, took offence at an apparent slight put upon him by a son of his father's brother. So he took an oath that his portion of the patrimonial land should never revert to the brother who would inherit from him and made a bond with his brothers that they should act likewise. Such a compact could never have been made by a man with his 'sons'. Characteristically, the compact left uneasy consciences. A generation later deaths occurred in the lineage. Diviners said they were a punishment for certain actions that resulted from this compact and Kunduzoor's grandsons were commanded to annul it. They could no longer do so in fact, but a token annulment and an expiatory sacrifice to their grandfather were considered sufficient.

In accordance with this principle we find that duties and rewards are distributed among siblings on a basis of equality of status, though in proportion to such distinguishing personal attributes as age, ability, need, and in conformity with the demands of the situation. When brothers work together as a team in the production of the household's food resources, each is expected to contribute the maximum share he is

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capable of; the care of livestock is the responsibility primarily of the younger men and boys, whereas such tasks as house-building and thatching fall principally on the older brothers who have the necessary skill. All labour for the common needs of the household is informally directed by the household head, but every member of the unit is expected to know his duties and to carry them out in co-operation with the others. In this connexion a father may insist on a son's giving up his own plans in order to carry out a job for the common good; a man cannot demand this of a younger brother. He can only give a lead or make a suggestion and rely on the younger man's sense of responsibility and concern for the interests of the household.

Conversely, siblings of the same household are entitled to equal treatment in drawing on the common resources of the household for the satisfaction of their wants. Brothers are entitled to equal treatment in the allocation of food-supplies from the common stock if they are married. If a man has two adult sons—own sons or proxy sons—and pays the bride-price for the wife of one of them, it is considered right for the second to be assisted to marry before his brother is allowed to draw on patrimonial livestock for a second wife. Great importance is attached to this rule in family relations. Injustice in this matter arouses resentment. It is one of the causes of friction between a man and his proxy father, and between half-brothers, that leads to the secession of the injured party, or, very often nowadays, to his leaving home to seek work abroad. Tallensi claim that cases of this sort are not uncommon; but those I was able to investigate show that discrimination in this respect between *sunzɔ* brothers is usually only one element in a complex picture of motives for seceding. The point stressed by the natives, however, is the principle; and observation shows that it is more commonly honoured than not. An almost ludicrous example of this was Yinworəb's dogged efforts to find a wife for his half-brother Yimbom. He failed, alas, for no girl would stay with so unprepossessing a man as Yimbom.

The notion of sharing is especially important in the ritual relations of brothers or the descendants of brothers. Many examples of this are quoted in our previous book.[1] Its outstanding characteristic is the precise distribution of roles and division of sacrificial or ceremonial foodstuffs, beer, and meat in accordance with the lineage relationships of the participants.

This emphasis on just sharing among siblings begins in childhood, first when siblings sit down to eat from a common dish, and then in the children's play-groups. I have many times stood by watching with some amusement while a group of small children solemnly divided up a small animal they had killed, a lizard or a mouse, for instance. They are always fair, especially to the younger ones; and they follow the pattern

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xiii.

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of distribution employed in the division of sacrificial meat, as they have seen it among adults, with hardly an error. By the age of 8 or 9, boys are sufficiently familiar with the lineage organization to have grasped this pattern.

The division of sacrificial and ceremonial food expresses precisely the genealogical structure of the lineage concerned. The first division is into equal shares for each of the major segments of the lineage; then a further division takes place on the same lines within each segment; and so on down to the smallest segments. Thus one can see the children of an expanded family of two homesteads divide a mouse first into halves, one for children of one homestead, the other half for the children of the other homestead, and then each group apportioning their share equally amongst the children of different mothers in the same joint family.

As these rules show, the configuration of social relations characteristic of brothers is generalized throughout the social structure, not, of course, in all its intimate nuances and particularities but in its structurally relevant norms. Where two persons or corporate groups are defined by descent as 'siblings' or 'brother-groups' they act towards each other as brothers would in a comparable situation. This, as we have previously found, is a fundamental principle of lineage organization and action.

The equality *inter se* of siblings, except for sex and age differences, postulates equality of rights in relation to their 'fathers' and to one another. The fiction by which the token rights of a woman and her children in her father's house are upheld—the theory that but for the accident of birth she might have been a son vested with a son's rights—is evidence of this. These rights become significant when a young man enters into the full productive activities of the household and when a girl gets married. It is in virtue of the labour he contributes to maintain the household, and in virtue of the bride-price she brings in, that youth and girl claim these rights. Thus these rights exist, by definition, only within the lineage framework, in relation to the corporate unity of the lineage. They are epitomized in the rule that brothers are equally entitled to inherit patrimonial property, especially land.

We have previously seen, however, that the entry of a youth into full economic responsibility coincides with the increasing progress of his self-differentiation as a social personality in his own right. There is no inconsistency in this. The unity and cohesion of family and lineage depend upon a balance of rights and duties among all the individuals involved. And the recognition of their rights and duties presupposes their self-differentiation as individuals, partly in terms of their respective maternal origins, but equally in terms of their developing social maturity and productive capacity.

The climax of this process comes with marriage, or more accurately with the establishment of a family on becoming a parent. This brings the

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cleavages between *sunzɔ* siblings, both on the level of jural and economic relations and in sentiment, more prominently to the fore. It is the starting-point of those intra-familial tensions that, according to native views, stir up jealousies between co-wives who are wives of brothers. As we know, these tensions are said to culminate, very often, in quarrels over alleged unfairness in the apportionment of food-supplies, or over the treatment of children, or other ostensible acts of discrimination between co-wives. This is one of the reasons most often adduced for a man's leaving the paternal homestead to farm on his own. From these tensions arise also those disagreements between brothers over petty trespasses on one another's property or independence, summed up in the conventional formula of 'quarrels about chickens and eggs'. The stage is thus set for the typical process of residential and economic fission in the joint family along the genealogical lines of cleavage inherent in it. The equality in status and rights of brothers in relation to one another within the lineage thus attains its maximum emphasis in the social structure. The natives are well aware of the economic pressures behind this process; but they also see that these pressures would not work out in just the way they do if it were not for the inherent dichotomy in the structure of the family and the lineage. These two factors mutually determine and reinforce each other.

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This brings up a point of some importance. It is conceivable that tension between brothers, whatever it is a symptom of, might result in young men separating after the death of their father, or after marriage, to take up land wherever they can find any. Thus a group of brothers would be scattered without respect to their lineage ties; and this process would in a few generations lead to the disintegration of the present highly localized lineage structure, and the emergence of a system of dispersed intermingled clans such as is found in many West African societies.[1] In fact, as previous chapters have shown, there is a slow process of dispersion in progress among the Tallensi all the time, but it has not led to a breakdown of the lineage system. The lineage ramifies, it does not break up into independent units that sever their genealogical ties with the main branch.

The basis of this is the fact that brothers separate but do not thereby relinquish membership of their maximal lineage. They do not sever their social and personal bonds with one another; which means that they do not forfeit any of their rights or relinquish any of their duties as sons and brothers. They are independent only within the bounds set by the corporate unity and the common interests of the lineage system. For it is only through his position in the lineage system that a Talɔŋ is able satisfactorily to secure his rights and perform his duties as a

[1] This would appear to be the case among the Ashanti (cf. R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, ch. viii) and the Jukun (cf. C. K. Meek, *A Sudanese Kingdom*, ch. ii), to cite only two widely separated examples.

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responsible member of his society. Of this we have had ample evidence.[1] Again, there are strong economic elements in the individual's adhesion to the lineage. There is the pressure due to the form and organization of Tale economy as a whole, which tends to restrict excessive mobility. As Tallensi themselves often put it, shrewdly picking on the key item in their productive cycle, it is all a question of manure, including human excrement. A home farm in one of the old settlements kept at a high level of fertility by continuous manuring is not light-heartedly abandoned.[2] This fact, and the scarcity of unutilized and unowned farmland in the old settlements, puts a premium on the right to inherit land in them. To-day, it is true, the pressure of these forces has been relaxed by the opening up of an easily accessible external labour market and of facilities for trade both in Taleland and with other areas. These extraneous outlets have made life easier for the natives but they have not, as we have observed before, materially altered their traditional mode of livelihood. In fact they serve to emphasize the contention of the natives that economic motives are of secondary consequence in maintaining lineage unity.

It is not joint interest in, and equal rights to the inheritance of, their patrimonial lands which alone hold a group of brothers together. Men who leave their natal settlements on account of land shortage do not return home eventually only because they have at last inherited their patrimonial lands. The decisive sanction, as we have shown in an earlier chapter, lies in the obligation of filial piety and what it stands for in terms of the jural and ritual functions of the lineage. The focus of unity for every lineage is the authority of the father, either the real authority of the living father or the mystical supremacy of the dead father or his surrogate, an ancestor spirit. Men like Yinworəb and Da'amo'o gave up wage labour in Kumasi very reluctantly to return home because the death of their fathers left them at the head of their respective joint families, and other similar cases have been quoted in an earlier chapter (p. 179). Similarly, a group of brothers may be scattered, some at home, some in a peripheral settlement, some in Mampurugu, some working abroad. On certain ritual occasions those who are near enough make a point of returning home. Family funerals, in particular, bring the scattered members of the family together. The three chief mourners at Tɛndaan Gieŋ's funeral were his brothers' sons Gikoo-Duun, who lived near Sameni in Mampurugu, Saanbuohba, who had been farming near Tola on the Red Volta for some years, and Baŋ-Duun who had been living at Biuŋ for nearly twenty years. They all

[1] In preceding chapters as well as in *Dynamics of Clanship*, *passim*.

[2] We have touched on this subject in our earlier book, chapters i and xi. It is more fully considered in C. W. Lynn's report, *Agriculture in North Mamprussi* (Dept. of Agriculture, Gold Coast, Bulletin 34, 1937), and in M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', *Africa*, IX, 1936.

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spoke of their ancestral home at Zubiuŋ as their 'real home (*ti yir ni yɛlmɛŋər*)' to which they would all return sooner or later. Two years later, in fact, both Saanbuohba and Baŋ-Duun did return to Zubiuŋ.

As these examples show, though the solidarity of siblings derives its psychological content from the fact of their growing up together, its validity as a norm of social relations among siblings is a function of the total field of lineage relations. In other words, whatever the personal relations of siblings may be, their indestructible social bonds spring from their common jural and ritual relationship to their parents; and 'sibling' in this context stands not only for individuals but for lineages, while 'parent' stands for any ancestor that may be relevant in a particular situation.

We must add that the friction which sibling rivalry between brothers occasionally gives rise to does not come to an end with their economic and residential separation. Self-interest among Tallensi provokes clashes of personality and of rights as much as anywhere else in the world. Tallensi say that the gravest disputes between brothers of the same nuclear lineage arise over land, though such disputes are very rare. Unlike the petty squabbles of day-to-day life, they are apt to end in blows and even bloodshed. I heard of several instances that had occurred during the previous thirty years, but only one came to my notice during my stay among the Tallensi. It was, however, a typical case. When Gunyam died, his sons Taagbin and Zayahkpɛmɔre inherited his lands and chattels, with Taagbin, the oldest son, as the senior heir. Taagbin allocated a portion of their late father's home farm to his younger brother. But the latter objected that he was being unfairly treated. The dispute ended in a fight in which Zayahkpɛmɔre was injured in the hand. Public opinion was severely critical of Zayahkpɛmɔre; for, as a Tale saying goes, an older brother who inherits his father's property and position is like one's father and should be treated with similar respect. But, as an elder of their section shrewdly pointed out when we were discussing this case, stupid as he is reputed to be, Zayahkpɛmɔre would never have raised his hand against Taagbin if the latter had been his proxy father and not his brother. Brothers quarrel just because they have equal rights in relation to one another.

There are two offences, however, which irrevocably disrupt the bonds of brotherhood if one brother commits either of them against another. As we have previously stated, it is a grave sin for a man to seduce the wife of a brother of the same inner or medial lineage. If this happens, the Tallensi say, the injured man and the culprit 'will never eat together again, will never sacrifice together again'. Because of this taboo a man may not sit on the same sleeping-mat as his brother's wife. 'It is as if he wanted to sleep with her', the natives say. Hence, also, it is considered to be improper for a man to address his brother's wife while he is alive as wife (*poya*), though he may speak of her to non-members

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of the same inner lineage as 'our wife (*ti pɔŋa*)' or even as 'my wife (*m-pɔŋa*)'; and, reciprocally, a woman speaks of her husband's brother of the same inner lineage as 'my husband (*n-sɛt*)' or, preferably, as 'my husband's older (younger) brother (*n-sɛt-bier* or *n-sɛt-pit*)', but does not address him thus. The proper reciprocal term of address is *n-kpee* ('my neighbour'), or *n-dakii* ('my sibling-in-law'). The terms for husband and wife are used in address only between a man and a distant clan-brother's wife.

The penalty for breaking this taboo has both a literal and a figurative meaning, in the sense that the brothers will never share anything again or take part in corporate activities as co-members of the same lineage. It amounts to social and religious ostracism for the sinner, and Tallensi say he would not long survive or his line of descent would perish. A similar penalty is said to follow the killing of a brother, whether it happens by accident or design. As we know, incest with a brother's wife is said to occur, though extremely rarely; fratricide by a brother of the same inner lineage as the victim is felt to be so abhorrent as to be likely to happen only by accident in exceptional circumstances. It has happened once or twice in the past, informants say, when brothers fought over the division of farm-land, but I have not heard of any cases having occurred in the last thirty years or so.[1]

The strength of the sanction we are considering can be judged from its incidence, in an attenuated degree, in cases of intra-clan homicide where the parties are not brothers of the same inner lineage. If this happens, whether intentionally or by accident, the maxim 'A cow has trampled her calf to death (*naaf n-nɔ bu bii ku*)' applies—that is to say, it is as if a cow had trampled its calf to death; so it is forbidden, on pain of bringing down the wrath of the ancestors, for the victim's close agnates to 'cancel the debt' by killing one of the slayer's close agnates. This rule holds also for lineages or clans interlinked by clanship or ritual ties. The guilty party offers expiatory sacrifices to the Earth and then a ritual reconciliation is effected between the two units concerned. But thenceforth the close agnates of the slayer—members of his nuclear lineage, usually—will not participate in a sacrifice in which the close agnates of the victim take part. If the homicide was deliberate, this taboo will even extend to all the patrilineal descendants of the two men. Thus Wakii-Sagbarug yidɛm and Kuruugdɛm are adjacent maximal lineages linked by clanship and ritual ties. On certain occasions they meet to sacrifice together at an Earth shrine common to them. The Kuruug people refrain from attending these sacrifices if the chief officiant is a member of a particular segment of Sagbarug yiri. A Kuruug man told me the reason for this in confidence. Some four or five

[1] There is a legend that one of the early chiefs of Tongo slew his brother in order to get the chiefship. Tallensi say this was following the customs of the Mamprusi. Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iv.

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593 682 784 generations ago the ancestor of this segment of Sagbarug yidem slew the ancestor of a segment of Kuruug, hence the two units may not sacrifice together. To do so would be to court the wrath of their collective ancestors.

593 578 602 Our analysis shows that what makes a rupture of the ties of brotherhood, at any level of lineage organization, so grave a matter, is the fact that it involves a rupture of the common filial relationship of the parties to a parent or ancestor. For it is from this relationship that the persons or units concerned derive their status of brotherhood relatively to one another.

593 602 In the preceding discussion we have spoken of brothers or siblings sometimes in the primary sense of these terms, sometimes in the classificatory sense. That is exactly how the natives use the kinship terms for siblings; and the speech context by itself does not always indicate the exact genealogical degree of the relationship between the speaker and the person referred to. Like the terms used for parents and children, these kinship terms only have a strict connotation, implying specific sentiments, rights, and duties within the standard classificatory range. Within the inner lineage, or at the utmost, in lineages of narrow span, the medial lineage, a person described by the speaker as his sister (*tau*) or older brother (*bier*) or younger brother (*pit*) can be shown by genealogical reckoning to be of his or her generation by birth, even if he or she belongs to a totally different age stratum. Thus Badiwona, aged 6, describes Tiezien, aged about 70, as his older brother because they have a common patrilineal grandfather; and Zoobon-Tɔŋ-Tɔbɛg's children call their contemporaries, Kurug's children, brothers and sisters because they have a common patrilineal great-great-grandfather and belong to the same inner lineage. The pattern of conduct and sentiment we have been describing holds within this range, with the qualification that the solidarity of siblings tends to be shallower and their equality of less personal consequence the more distant their genealogical connexion within the inner lineage. But so close-knit is the inner lineage as a corporate unit in relation to wider corporate groupings that these differences of degree very often vanish altogether, except for the difference between *soog* and *sunzɔ* siblings.

593 602 613 As usual, it depends on the situation and on the kind of interests involved. The situation steers conduct and sentiment; it is an infallible guide to the connotation of the kinship terms used in it. To take a few examples: A man may be nearly starving; he will be much more likely to receive a gift of grain from one of his matrilateral kinsmen than from a distant *sunzɔ* brother of the same inner lineage. Similarly, if a man is hard pressed in his farming programme, he will ask a uterine kinsman or an affinal kinsman to assist him and not a *sunzɔ* brother of the same inner lineage. These are personal problems and they are dealt with by invoking cognatic kinship ties. But in ritual and jural affairs it is the

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other way round. These involve not individual economic or social interests but the common interests of the lineage. If a man has to answer a charge of having abducted another man's wife, or meet a demand for the payment of bride-price or the surrender of the custody of a child, his 'brothers' and 'fathers' of the same inner lineage will rally round him unanimously. For marriage affairs (*pɔŋadir ycla*) involve the common interests of the whole lineage. The observer cannot deduce from the opinions or actions of any member of the inner lineage, in such a situation, whether he is the full (*soog*) brother or the paternal (*sunzɔ*) brother, or a more distant classificatory brother or father of the main actor.

The differences of degree in the solidarity of siblings is most apparent in residential, economic, and domestic arrangements. So if one asks a man whom he lives with and he replies 'I share a homestead with my older brother (*man ni m-bier la kab kpeerəme'*—lit. 'I and my older brother enter together'), one can be certain that the older brother referred to is not more distantly related to him than a father's half-brother's son. But the term *bier* has a different connotation in marriage affairs. For instance, Yin's son's father-in-law came one day to see Yin about the payment of his daughter's bride-price. There was a long and at moments acrimonious argument, with the intermediary (*pɔŋaŝama*) acting as conciliator. At length Yin said: 'I agree to your terms; but of course I must first consult my older brothers (*biernam*).' Everybody understood that what Yin meant was that he should first have to obtain the formal consent of the elders of his inner lineage.

As we have learnt before, generation differences are not reckoned beyond the limits of the inner or at most medial lineage. Beyond this range, therefore, all clanswomen are called sisters (*tap*) and all clansmen who are one's contemporaries or one's own siblings' contemporaries are described as siblings. In relation to them the pattern of sentiment and conduct that holds between true siblings only comes into action *vis-à-vis* non-clansmen, and then in a very attenuated form. It is a question chiefly of united action and mutual loyalty in the service of the corporate interests of the maximal lineage or clan. So any man will come to the assistance of a clansman in an argument or fight with a man of another clan, irrespective of the rights or wrongs of the case. This is vividly seen in hunting or fishing battues. It is a very common thing for two or three men to lay claim to having killed an animal, especially if no arrow is found embedded in the animal's flesh. Then the clansmen of the claimants rally round them and their dispute turns into a violent altercation between two or three solid phalanxes of hunters. As we have previously narrated,[1] a famous war of the old days began in this way. Similarly, market brawls occasionally arise from a man's clansmen coming to his support in an argument. The commonest

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xiii.

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cause of such brawls is women. A man sees a man of another clan talking to the wife of a member of his inner or medial lineage—or even to the wife of a distant clansman of his. He suspects the couple of plotting the woman's abduction and accuses them of this. In a few minutes clansmen of the two disputants who happen to be near come to their support; and so a brawl may ensue.

But where the ideal of the equality and solidarity of siblings is most apparent in social relations outside the inner lineage, is in the institutionalized co-operation of lineages and lineage segments. It is most conspicuous in important ceremonial and ritual matters such as funerals or changes in the custody of lineage shrines. But it emerges also in jural affairs such as marriage transactions and reconciliation ceremonies. The maxim 'Brothers look after one's affairs (*Sunzɔp mmaan yɛla*)' sums this up for the native. Thus, as we have described in our previous book,[1] at funeral ceremonies all the *sunzɔ* lineages of the group celebrating the funeral are bound to be present, and it is the representatives of these lineages that supervise and mostly take the lead in the various rites. When Kpe'emi died, the messengers bearing the sad tidings did not go straight home to his father. They went first to an elder of a different section (*yizug*) of the clan; he took them to the head of a segment of Kpe'emi's section different from that to which Kpe'emi belonged; and this man took them to the head of Kpe'emi's segment, who conducted them to Kpe'emi's father. Thus the blow was softened by the presence, the condolences, and the immediate ritual action of *sunzɔp* of different degrees. Similarly, if a man seduces a clansman's wife, he appeals not to his own immediate lineage head but to the head of an inner or medial lineage closely related to his to intercede on his behalf. The reciprocal of these and similar acts of assistance given to *sunzɔp* is the strictly defined rights of *sunzɔp* lineages to certain shares of sacrificial or ceremonial meat, beer, flour, and so forth. But the Tallensi do not regard these rights as rewards for 'looking after' the affairs of a *sunzɔ*. The rights and the duties coexist as equally essential features of the relationship of 'brother' lineages.

As these examples show, there are, in fact, no person-to-person social relations between individuals who are only clan-siblings of the same quality as sibling relations in the narrow sense. Their solidarity is a consequence of the general solidarity of the clan in situations affecting the common interest. Thus clan-brothers have no property relations *qua* clansmen. But the chief distinction between clan and inner lineage siblings lies in the sphere of sex. As we are aware, sexual relations with clan sisters outside the medial lineage are not regarded as disgraceful, and to have sexual relations with a distant clansman's wife is considered to be adultery, not incest. Tallensi, thinking of these matters in their inveterate socio-spatial terminology, say that clan siblings are 'too far'

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 215 ff.

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to be treated as real siblings and 'too close' to be treated as if they were non-clansfolk in these matters. So one cannot marry a clan-sister but may have sexual relations with her, and one cannot abduct a clansman's wife, but to seduce her is not a sin. That adultery with a clansman's wife is very rare and is vehemently reprobated is a sign of the strength of clan solidarity, not of the strength of the sibling tie between clansmen.

A further point of significance is that whereas competition between brothers of the same inner lineage for wives or for politico-ritual office is held to be improper, distant clan-brothers may and do compete. No self-respecting youth would court a girl whom his brother of the same inner lineage is seeking in marriage unless it be on his brother's behalf; but it is a very common thing for several young men of the same maximal lineage or clan to court the same girl in friendly rivalry. Again, Tallensi say that until very recently, when the white man's criteria of suitability for a chiefship superseded the traditional standards, two men of the same inner lineage would never or very rarely compete for a vacant chiefship.[1] In the past, if a chiefship fell vacant, it was generally the oldest men of the clan, heads of at least medial lineages, who competed for it. Speaking of these matters Tallensi say: 'A man and his brother[2] do not like each other (*nit ni u mabiiga pu boot taaba*).' To win a chiefship, they assert, a man will not hesitate to resort secretly to medicine shrines, or to make extravagant promises to his ancestor shrines and the Earth, in order to compass the defeat of his rivals.

The Social Equivalence of Siblings Reconsidered

The solidarity and equality of siblings is a reflex of their social equivalence, but these do not mean the same thing. Equality exists between siblings; their social equivalence lies in their relations with the community at large, as has already been indicated. Many features of the configuration of sentiment and conduct we have analysed in the preceding pages acquire a new shade of meaning if we recognize them as indices of the social equivalence of siblings as well as being expressions of their equality.

Siblings are socially equivalent by reason of their genealogical identity, in whole, as between full (uterine, i.e. *soog*) siblings, or in part, as between patrilineal siblings. There are degrees of social equivalence corresponding to degrees of genealogical identity; so that *soog* siblings are more nearly equivalent than half-siblings and half-siblings than ortho-cousins, and so on.

In regard to their social roles, their rights, and their duties, wherever these are determined by descent, siblings are therefore the more closely identified the nearer they are to one another genealogically, and that

[1] A chiefship is always vested in a particular clan or maximal lineage. Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iv.

[2] A 'brother' of a different medial lineage is meant here.

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593 554 covers almost every standard social relationship of siblings in Tale society. Siblings are laterally identified with one another, so to speak; brothers can replace one another in the social structure in a way that gives rise to a minimum of readjustment in the social relations of any other people affected. This contrasts with the vertical identification of parent and child, which rests on the continuity of the descent line not on actual or potential identity of social roles. This is a generalized formula. It leaves out of account a very important item, the effect of the sexual dichotomy of Tale culture. The distinctive social roles imposed on men and women by this factor restrict the identification of brother and sister to a narrow sphere, and the functions of women limit the social equivalence of sisters to their relationship with each other's children.

593 855 577 In infancy and childhood the equivalence of siblings is of little consequence. It comes out chiefly in the rule that parents should not discriminate between their children (proxy children as well as own children). Tallensi say that, in practice, one cannot help preferring one son to another or one daughter to another. One child may be more obedient or industrious or better tempered than his brothers and sisters, so one will be inclined to favour him; and there is the admitted bias in favour of younger children, especially the youngest, as we have seen. Moreover, proxy children are rarely as dear to the heart of a parent as own children are. Even a mother, whose love for all her children (except the youngest) is proverbially without bias, sometimes has favourites among them. There is plenty of evidence for these admissions. The Chief of Tongo had well over two-score children; among them his favourites were a son and a daughter of about 18, born soon after he was appointed chief. Nor do such preferences stop with childhood. Tiezien reposed his trust in his late brother's two sons, who had grown up in his care. The only son he had of his own who was old enough to assist him in public affairs was, he said good humouredly, too stupid.

But, say the Tallensi, this is a matter of *feelings*—what 'your heart desires (*i suh mboot*)'. When it is a matter of *rights*, to discriminate between children is bad, almost sinful; it is like rejecting one child for the sake of another. It would be regarded as iniquitous for a man to let some of his children go hungry while others were well fed. With two adult sons, as we have seen, it is considered right for both of them to be assisted to marry before either is allowed to have two wives. It is the same with other things in which there is an element of right or duty; and the majority of natives are very conscientious in this matter, at least as far as their own children are concerned. Nowadays, in particular, as has often been emphasized to me, if a man has two sons and does not deal with them equally, the one who feels himself unjustly treated soon finds an opportunity for running away to seek work abroad. Sensible parents follow this rule conscientiously even in trivial matters. Omara

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had two little daughters, aged about 3, by different wives. One day the two children appeared very proudly each wearing a strip of cotton print about the waist. Omara explained that he had bought them these 'skirts', which had to be exactly the same in size and pattern. Had they been different in colour or size, or had he bought the children different presents, they would have been very upset and their mothers angry. He would have been accused of discriminating between them.

As this instance suggests, the closer children are in age or parentage or both the more should they be treated alike. The limiting case is that of twins and this deserves a special note. Twins (*leeba*)[1] are not greeted with joy among the Tallensi; but they are not destroyed; nor are they regarded as sacred in any circumstances; nor is the mother subject to moral censure or ritual penalties. But no woman desires to bear twins. One of the most efficacious medicines that can be placed in a ground-nut plot or among *ma'ana* (*Hibiscus esculentus*), *bet* (*H. sabdariffa*), or *bɛris* (*H. cannabinus*) plants—all of which supply favourite ingredients for sauces[2]—to prevent women from pilfering these crops is the medicine of twins (*leeba teem*) used in purifying the parents of twins. Anyone who defies this charm will have twins, it is said. I have seen women run on catching sight unexpectedly of a twin medicine charm dangling in a farm.

Tallensi believe that twins may not be 'human (*ninvoo*)'—i.e. complete social beings—at birth. As soon as they are born, a man who owns twin medicine is asked for medicine to mark their sleeping-place. If one or both die shortly after birth that is proof positive that he or they are *kɔlkpaaris*, malicious bush sprites, not human beings. They are then buried ignominiously in a special uninhabited place. A twin that survives the first month or so of life is tacitly assumed to be human and treated as an ordinary child. But if it dies in early infancy it may still prove to have been a *kɔlkpaarɔg*, when the cause of its death is sought by divination. Its death will cause great distress to its parents, for it will have been treated with as much affection and devotion as a normal child, but it will not receive normal burial. Only when it reaches the age of about 4 [i.e. is old enough to have a following sibling (*nyeer*)] and is placed under the spiritual guardianship of an ancestor spirit, is a twin definitely regarded as a complete social being.

Tallensi seem to expect, as a matter of course, that at least one of a pair of twins will die in very early infancy.[3] The survivor then has to be

[1] They are always named *Yin* (Heaven) for the older and *Zuur* (tail) for the younger—*Yin*, 'because he sees the light of day first'; *Zuur* 'because he comes last'.

[2] *Vide* previously cited paper 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', by M. and S. L. Fortes.

[3] I can state with absolute certainty that every effort is made to keep twins alive. But the natives assert that the sheer physical strain of nursing and caring for twins is too much for most women. This is highly probable considering that

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ritually 'pegged (*ba*')'—fastened to life, as it were—and is henceforth regarded as human. But whether either or both of the twins survive, the parents have to undergo a co[illegible] ritual purification after their birth. This is believed to act a[illegible] l safeguard against the recurrence of such a misfortune beside[illegible]ing them of the ill luck that has occurred.

In spite of this mystical back[illegible]ns that survive are regarded and treated as ordinary human be[illegible] But there is one point on which very great stress is laid. Twins must be treated exactly alike by their parents. 'If you give one a portion of porridge you must give the other an equal portion; if you give one a penny you must give the other a penny', said one informant. If they are brothers, they will live together all their lives. If they are sisters they must be married to the same settlement[1] or to adjacent and interlinked settlements. For it is as if they are one person and yet are two. They are completely equal, completely equivalent siblings; and if they are not so treated, *ba ku nye ɔmma*, things will not turn out well for them.

Rights and duties become important in adulthood, when they are actively claimed and discharged; and it is in the social relations of adults that the equivalence of siblings becomes conspicuous. It is best exemplified in three institutions, the levirate, the rules of inheritance and succession, and the extension of patrilineal, matrilateral, and sororal kinship ties. We have dealt with various aspects of these subjects in preceding chapters. Brief recapitulation with reference to the present context is all that is needed here. The kinship aspect comes up again in the following chapter. But before we look again at the levirate and at the rules of inheritance, it is worth noting some of the minor indications of the equivalence of siblings.

There is, firstly, the idea that the bride-price received for a girl should be earmarked for the payment of the bride-price for the wife of her closest brother. This convention is not strictly upheld, for the deciding

rtificial feeding is unknown to the Tallensi. During our stay among them two pairs of twins and a set of triplets (who are treated in exactly the same way as twins) were born to people known personally to my wife and me. Even to a layman's eye it was obvious that the triplets were doomed from the first, both because they were so puny and because the mother was so utterly exhausted. Of the two pairs of twins, only one child survived the first few weeks of life, and this child, when last heard of, did not seem to have a very good chance of reaching childhood. I do not know what the incidence of twin births is among the Tallensi. The best-known owner of twin medicine at Tongo told me he had had five cases during the past two years or so and of these only one child was still alive. I knew only one pair of living twins, aged about 7 or 8, among all the children—easily running into three figures—whom my wife and I got to know throughout Taleland. Single survivors of twins are more common and I knew four. Thus the native view of the high mortality of twins appears to be justified by the facts.

[1] They are, of course, not a pair of successive sisters, so the concept of *nyeer* (*v. supra*, p. 253) does not apply.

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a. Children of a single domestic family. From left to right: Da'ano'o's child, his late father's child, his agnatic cousin's (i.e. classificatory brother's) child

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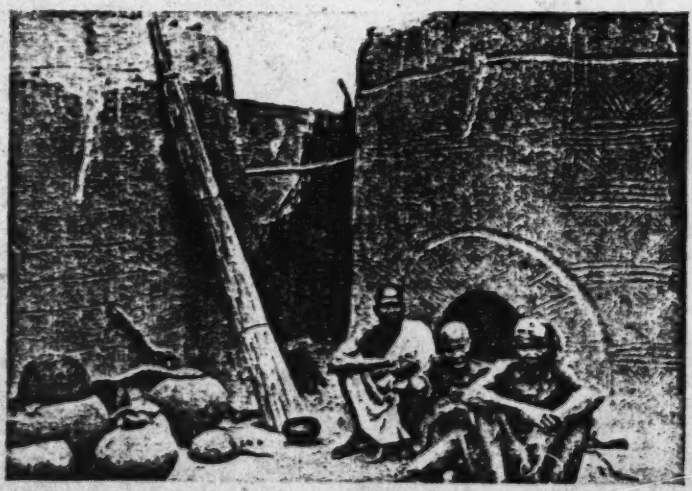

b. Four generations. From left to right: Nyaanzum, his own mother with his infant son, his older (deceased) half-brother's son, who married his mother after his father's death and brought him up

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voice in the disposal of bride-price payments always lies with the head of the joint family. He has to strike a balance between the different claims that have to be met; but other things being equal he will earmark at least a portion of a daughter's bride-price for her *soog* brother's use in espousing a wife, or if he has a wife, her nearest *sunzɔ* brother. Tallensi say that a self-respecting man should be specially scrupulous in this matter with his proxy children, but that sometimes proxy fathers are not. I have known elders of the inner lineage put pressure on a man to abide by the rule. Thus one of the grouses Sinkawol had against his proxy father Tiezien was that the latter had refused to part with cattle received for Sinkawol's *soog* sister in order to secure a second wife for Sinkawol or his *soog* brother. By contrast, one of the few things in favour of Na'abzɔ was that he allowed his proxy son Siŋ (who was farming on his own) to keep the money received in payment of Siŋ's half-sister's bride-price, against the day when Siŋ would need it himself to pay bride-price. Siŋ, incidentally, prudently handed over the money for safe-keeping to a friend, lest he himself should be tempted to fritter it away in meeting petty needs, or, worse still, lest Na'abzɔ should suddenly demand it for the payment of some debt that had meanwhile become urgent. This convention, in short, represents not a right to a sister's bride-price but an acknowledgement of the social equivalence of siblings.

Conventionalized joking between a man and his wife's siblings (in the widest classificatory sense of all her clan-siblings), and of a woman with her husband's sisters and his more distant clansmen, is another indication of the social equivalence of siblings. We have discussed this before and need only draw attention here to the associated custom by which a man is allowed to sleep with a wife's unmarried sister who comes on a visit. It is very difficult to ascertain how far this custom is actually practised. Men say it was commoner in the old days when girls were not married off, as they often are now, before puberty, but at a somewhat later age. None of the men I knew best claimed to have slept with a sister-in-law; but several said they had 'played' (*deem*)—a euphemism for flirtation ending in stealthy sex relations—with visiting sisters-in-law of one of their near clansmen. At the same time, in joking with a sister-in-law or talking about a sister-in-law men always emphasize this custom, as if it were an unchallengeable right.

Another illustration associated with the joking relationship between siblings-in-law is the terminology used between them. A man's sisters speak of his wife—and sometimes address her, half jokingly—as 'our wife (*ti poya*)' and the wife uses the reciprocal term 'husband' (*set*) in the same way of them. I once heard a girl of about 9 address her sister-in-law thus. Pretending ignorance, I asked her why she did so. 'Our wife (she is)', came the answer, with a gesture of disdain that amused the wife, 'Have we not given cows for her?'

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PLATE 14

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a. Siblings by the same parents have breakfast together. The bigger children are a boy and a girl. Note that they are eating out of the same dish

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b. Successive (*nyeer*) *soog* brothers

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In ritual activities the social equivalence of siblings is constantly apparent, and in its most flexible form. For example, in almost every one of the elaborate series of rites that make up funeral ceremonies certain duties fall on particular kin of the dead person. A typical instance is the cooking of 'sisters-in-law porridge (*pɔyakiis sayabo*)', one of the inaugural rites of every funeral. Two 'wives' and a 'daughter' of the clan together cook porridge in a prescribed ritual fashion. Usually the rite is performed by daughters and wives of the inner lineage that is celebrating the funeral, but any daughter of the clan and any wife of the clan can serve. The rite ends with a 'sister's son (*ahɔŋ*)' pretending to whip the women who cook the porridge with a twig. As there is not always a true sister's son present, a member of the clan has to act instead. There is never any difficulty in finding somebody who is qualified to do so. By going back far enough almost anybody can trace a matrilateral link with his own clan and can therefore act as a 'sister's son' for the purpose of the rite. Thus at Sayawuob's mother's funeral Latarəg acted as 'sister's son'. His father's mother's mother had been a daughter of the clan section to which Sayawuob belongs and that made him a classificatory 'sister's son' for purposes of this rite. A double identification lies behind such assimilations of remote to near kin. There is the lateral identification of any daughter of the clan with any other daughter of the clan, living or dead; and there is the vertical identification of a person with any of his ancestors in certain situations.

A somewhat different illustration is the following. We have seen, in our earlier book,[1] how the genealogical equality ('but for the accident of birth') of women members of the lineage and clan with their brothers is recognized both in secular and in ritual custom. Among all the daughters of a lineage—from the minimal to the maximal span, as it emerges in a particular context—the oldest of them, the *pɔyayabələg-kpeŋ*, has special prestige. She stands for the genealogical equality of women and men in the lineage. She has a kind of honorary equality with the male head of the lineage. She has no authority in lineage affairs; but if she happens to be present when they are being discussed she may speak her mind freely and will be listened to with respect. In the case of the senior daughter of a medial or lesser lineage, she has the right to be informed in advance of every important ceremonial event in the lineage. If she attends, she is entitled to a special portion of the sacrificial meat usually allocated to the daughters—the backbone, upper ribs, and intestines. But there is a curious custom which shows her symbolic equivalence with her brother, the lineage head, best. She may never sleep under the same roof with him, even if he is her own full brother. If she did, one of them would die. There is a feeling that in the eyes of the ancestors the oldest male and oldest woman of a lineage are so nearly equivalent that the latter could easily replace the

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 52 and ch. ix.

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former. The taboo emphasizes the superiority of the male members in spite of genealogical equivalence. There is an obverse to this taboo. The token funeral performed for a woman by her father's people, after her real funeral at her husband's home, is made for a *pɔɣayabəlg-kpɛŋ* not by her own father's heirs but by the head of the inner or medial or even maximal lineage, her status-brother, so to speak. Tallensi say she belongs to the whole lineage not to her paternal family.

To revert to the levirate, the fundamental rule is that a man's widow may be inherited only by a 'brother' or a 'grandson' in his own clan or a linked clan, or by a 'sister's son' in an unrelated clan. The two principles involved are those of the equivalence of siblings and of the equivalence of alternate generations. A 'sister's son's' leviratic rights go back to the notion that his 'mother' might have been a man and a 'brother' of the dead man. He is exercising the rights that might have been his 'mother's'; hence this, too, is a recognition of the equivalence of siblings. What is absolutely prohibited is to inherit the widow of a 'son' or a 'father'.

In theory, as we know, these rights extend to 'brothers', 'grandsons', and 'sisters' sons' in the widest connotation of these terms. Joint leviratic rights is one of the critical norms of clanship,[1] implying that all men of the clan are 'brothers'. In practice these rights are neither absolute, nor are they equal for all men who are ostensibly entitled to them. Various factors enter into the picture, but the most important are the widow's preferences and the genealogical distance between her dead husband and whoever is seeking her hand. The strongest efforts are made to prevent a widow of child-bearing age from remarrying out of the nuclear, or at most inner, lineage of her late husband. His full and half-brothers have the strongest claim to the widow. This is based not only on the argument of genealogical proximity but on what this implies. They have contributed by their labour to the bride-price that was paid for her, and if she marries a distant clansman of theirs they lose the returns on this that children represent; for a man marrying a distant clan-brother's widow need not, in theory, refund the bride-price the latter's nuclear lineage gave for her. Actually a refund of the bride-price is often demanded in such cases and usually paid to avoid ill-feeling between the two inner lineages concerned. In addition, full and half-brothers are the dead man's coheirs. They take possession of the patrimonial property he administered during his lifetime. They accept responsibility for his debts and assume the custody of his children. For all these acts the Tallensi use the concept *vaa* (to inherit or succeed to). So they say a man *vaa* (inherits) his late brother's land, livestock, and children; and it is just, therefore, that he should also inherit his privileges and rights, especially in the matter of his widow. As brothers of the same nuclear lineage are coheirs of their patrimonial

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 41.

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property it is good enough if she marries any one of them. In practice, a widow of child-bearing age who has children by her late husband usually consents to remarry one of his close brothers.

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Next to a brother of the nuclear lineage, a brother of the late husband's inner lineage is considered to have a strong claim to his widow's hand. If a man dies leaving two widows of child-bearing age it is considered proper for one of them to be given to a member of her late husband's nuclear lineage and for the other to go to another nuclear segment of the same inner lineage. If a widow appears to be unwilling to marry her late husband's half-brother, for example, and is prepared to marry one of his 'brothers' of the same inner lineage, she is usually allowed to do so by the head of her husband's nuclear lineage. The new husband is still spoken of as having inherited the widow. In every case that came under my notice widows of child-bearing age married into their late husband's inner lineage if they had young children. But in a few cases, amounting to about three out of ten, these second marriages broke down after a time. Childless young widows often prefer to go back to their parental home and try their luck again on the marriage market.

Beyond the range of the inner lineage a 'brother' of the dead man has only the rights of a clansman. If the widow is of child-bearing age he will have to be very circumspect in courting her; for he can only marry her if she chooses him in preference to other claimants, and this means she must be courted. Hence it is more usual to speak of 'marrying' (*di*) a widow than of 'inheriting' (*vaa*) her in such cases. But it would be a very bold woman who, left a widow while still capable of bearing children, rejected a husband's brother of the same inner lineage in favour of a clansman of his. Only in exceptional cases would such an action not create ill feeling between the two clan segments concerned. Such an exceptional case occurred when Baroog died leaving nine widows. His father tried hard to persuade several distant clansmen of his to seek the widows in marriage. The reason was that Baroog had no adult brothers in his nuclear lineage and so few in his inner lineage that they would not be able to inherit all the widows. For few men wish to inherit more than one widow at a time. Rather than let them return to their fathers and be sought in marriage by men of other clans, Baroog's father preferred to see them marry distant clansmen of his.

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Widows beyond the age of child-bearing have complete freedom of choice in selecting a new husband from among their late husband's clansmen. Often such marriages are merely nominal. The woman continues to live with a grown-up son and her new husband comes to visit her occasionally and sends her a little grain now and then. If the widow has no adult son she will live with her new husband, adding to the labour power of his household and to its indirect sources of income through the gifts she obtains from her patrilineal kin, for example, or any private property of her own, such as a couple of sheep or goats.

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Inheritance of a grandfather's widow by a grandson, in the patrilineal line, is confined to the inner or at most the medial lineage for the simple reason that generation differences are not reckoned beyond those limits. Such marriages are not common because few men live long enough to have adult grandsons. The case of Tiezien, previously recorded, who married his grandfather Kuŋkoŋki's young widow is the only one of its kind I encountered. For at least another generation or two the custom of inheriting a grandfather's widow will probably survive in that lineage. For Nyaaŋzum, Tiezien's proxy father whom he brought up, is the last of his generation in that medial lineage, hence his widows will have to go to his own or classificatory grandsons.

A sister's son (*ahəŋ*) cannot marry his true mother's brother's (*ahəb*) widow. That would be incest, since he identifies his *ahəb* with his mother and therefore thinks of him as a quasi-father. He can marry his *ahəb*'s son's widow or his *ahəb*'s father's widow; for he regards the son as a 'brother', and the father is his grandfather. If the sister's son and mother's brother are uterine kin (*saarət*), marriage of the latter's son's widow to the former is generally approved of by the dead man's inner lineage—provided, of course, there are no better claimants among the dead man's brothers—for a uterine *ahəŋ*, as we shall see more fully presently, is considered to be almost as closely related to his mother's brother's nuclear lineage as a born member of it. Nevertheless, such marriages are rare, and the few instances I heard of all seemed to be due to special circumstances. In one case, in which I knew the parties personally, the woman was suspected of being sterile, and the sister's son was known to be a special favourite of his mother's brother; in others the women were apparently too old for child-bearing.

In theory any member of another clan who can trace kinship with the clan of a widow's late husband through an ancestress can be called a 'sister's son' or a 'grandson (*yaaŋ*)' in the widest classificatory sense. I heard of two or three cases of such distant *ahəs* marrying the widows of members of their classificatory 'mother's brother's lineage', but the women were all elderly and the marriages were purely nominal. There was one case, however, in which a man eloped with the widow of a member of the inner lineage from which his paternal great-grandmother had come. This was widely spoken of as a scandal, and the pair were never forgiven by the first husband's nuclear lineage; but nothing could be done about it as the *ahəŋ* had the support of the letter of custom. The truth is that a 'sister's son' has no chance against the corporate solidarity of his 'mother's brother's' lineage. He can succeed only if they tacitly withdraw their claims or openly give him permission to court the widow.[1]

The levirate thus brings out clearly the social equivalence of siblings and shows how it is graded in accordance with genealogical distance.

[1] Cf. p. 240 above, and Ch. XI below.

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593 595 We might mention here that the institution of the sororate, which is considered by some authorities[1] to be the natural complement of the levirate, only exists in a rudimentary—some might say vestigial—form among the Tallensi. It comes up if a man loses his only wife and is left a lone widower. Then his father-in-law sends a party of mourners to the funeral who take with them a young girl of his clan—perhaps one of his own daughters, perhaps the daughter of a 'brother' of his inner or medial lineage. This girl, a real or classificatory sister of the dead wife, is presented to the grief-stricken widower. She has been brought, the father-in-law's messengers say, 'to sit on your knees, to console you, to dry your tears, to be your wife' and so take the place of her dead sister. It is, however, more a gesture of condolence than a real offer of a substitute for the dead wife. Tallensi say that very occasionally the girl might stay on as the wife of the widower; most commonly she goes home immediately after the funeral or within a few weeks. Her deputy wifehood is purely ceremonial, for she is usually too young to do all the housekeeping or to be slept with.

428 The rules of inheritance among brothers also illustrate the gradation of their social equivalence in accordance with their genealogical distance. These rules have been considered from various angles in earlier contexts and little remains to be added. Their operation, as we have seen, depends on the conditions of economic co-operation to a very considerable extent. If two brothers farm together they automatically have joint rights in all lands, livestock, and other resources they possess. If one dies the other does not so much inherit his property and position in society as amalgamate it with his own. What was formerly managed by two men conjointly now becomes the concern of one man. There is practically no change, to begin with, in the social relations of their dependants as the result of the death of one brother. When Nindɔyat died his *soog* brother Yintee inherited the homestead they had both occupied. Nindɔyat's wives at first stayed on as Yintee's wives, his children naturally remained in the homestead. They had lost their own father, but there was no change in their social position or their economic condition as a result of his death. If brothers farm independently they inherit from each other in order of seniority and of degree of consanguinity. Patrimonial property, rights, and ritual objects that have been transmitted intact from their fathers are inherited strictly by seniority amongst the group of brothers who trace their descent to the original holder of these possessions. But property acquired by the deceased's own father goes only to his brothers by the same father, in order of seniority. And the custody of his children will pass to his genealogically nearest brother whether or not he is the heir to the patrimonial property.

593 428 Here a revealing jural fiction deserves mention. Brothers are thought

[1] Cf. Lowie, R., *Primitive Society*, p. 33.

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to be closer to one another than father and son—this is one aspect of their social equivalence, as we have previously observed. In theory this holds for any brother of the same inner lineage, in practice it is only full or half-brothers who feel such close bonds. Now any land a man acquires by his own efforts goes to his sons, not to his brothers. There is no question about this. The sons have contributed by their labour to the acquisition of the land and this is their title to it. Cattle acquired by purchase also belong to the man's sons; but the heir to the patrimonial property, if he is a proxy father to or a father's brother's son older than the man's own sons, has titular control over the use to which they may wish to put any of their father's livestock. It is different with clothes and weapons; and here the fiction we have mentioned comes into the picture. Clothes are very intimately associated with a person; they are a sort of extension of his individuality, as was suggested in an earlier chapter. A man's bow, his quiver of arrows, his knife, and his spear are also thought of as symbols of himself as an individual in a way that land is not. The fiction is that such personal effects should be inherited by a man's brothers, not by his sons. Thus when a man's funeral is finished his brothers of the inner lineage assemble in his *zoŋ*. His oldest son fetches all his personal effects in. But the brothers do not divide them amongst themselves. At most they might take an arrow apiece from the dead man's quiver. The other personal effects they will restore to the sons. 'We have seen it and now you keep it', they say. A full or half-brother, especially one who has farmed with the deceased, may, if he desires, take some garments. He may take all if the dead man's children are all too young to farm for themselves, as he then becomes their proxy father in fact as well as in name. Even then he might return some of the clothes to the sons when they are old enough to use them.

In the same way a woman's personal effects go to her daughters on her death, but her close sisters may claim some of them if they wish. For example, every woman accumulates a number of calabashes (*ŋmaa*, pl. *ŋmana*) during her lifetime. There is a good material reason for this, for there is hardly a more useful domestic utensil than the ubiquitous calabash dish. A woman will, however, store away her best calabashes for use on special occasions only. As she grows older she collects more and more of these select calabashes, and an old woman may have as many as forty or fifty. She keeps them in her large string bag (*saalŋ*), hung up in the darkest corner of her sleeping-room. At the bottom of the *saalŋ* bag is the largest and finest calabash. This will be part of her *kumpiog* (basket of death) when she dies. In it she keeps her particular treasures. Because of this an old woman's *saalŋ* is as sacrosanct as a man's granary—to which, in fact, Tallensi compare it. No one but the old woman herself ever looks into the bottom calabash of the *saalŋ*. When she dies an old woman's *kumpiog* is taken to her oldest daughter, who also gets the *saalŋ* bag. But she does not get all

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428 593 the calabashes. The old woman's close sisters have first pick of the calabashes and the remainder are divided among her daughters and daughters-in-law.

Outside the inner lineage, as has been previously indicated, succession goes by age seniority. Succession to the custody of a maximal lineage *boyar* or to a politico-ritual office such as a chiefship or tendaanaship follows this rule. This, as we can now see, is in conformity with the principle that members of the same maximal lineage or clan who are not of the same inner lineage are titular 'brothers'.

593 602 It is in the usages of extended kinship, however, that the social equivalence of siblings is most apparent. We have already dealt at length with the extensions of parental roles within the lineage and it is necessary only to observe that they are based on the principle of the social equivalence of brothers. We shall find, in the next chapter, that it is an equally important factor in the web of matrilateral and sororal kinship ties, outside the agnatic lineage.[1] We shall see that, as in the ramification of lineage structure, so in extra-clan kinship bonds the tie of siblingship is the principal mechanism of their wide-spreading reticulation.

[1] This is Radcliffe-Brown's theory of the chief mechanism responsible for classificatory kinship in primitive societies. Tale material amply supports him. See Radcliffe-Brown, 'Social Organisation of Australian Tribes', previously cited, and his articles on 'The Mother's Brother in South Africa', *South African Journal of Science*, xxi, 1924, and on 'The Study of Kinship Systems', *J.R.A.I.*, lxxi, 1941.

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members of his inner lineage, at what he called the deliberate flouting of his rights as *biiraan*, owner of the child. A long squabble between the two lineages followed which eventually petered out in a compromise. This may seem a storm in a teacup; it was taken very seriously by a dozen Tale elders.

The outstanding example of the retention of patrilineal rights is found in the case of a girl who grows up at her *ahəb yiri*. Whatever her personal relations with her father's lineage may be, it is they who receive the placation gifts and the bride-price when she marries. The *ahəb*'s share is only the 'cow of rearing'.

Cases of girls living as foster children at their *ahəb yiri* up to marriageable age are uncommon. I knew of only one girl who was living with her *ahəb* and would probably not be taken back by her father's people before she reached marriageable age. A girl living with her mother's brother is usually there because she was sent to her maternal grandmother in early childhood owing to the death of her mother. She may be left there until she is 11 or 12, but she is then generally fetched by her father's people. A boy has more freedom. He cannot be forced to return to his paternal home if he does not wish to do so.

An interesting reflection of the conventional ideas on the relations of an *ahəb* and his foster *ahəŋ* is found in the story commonly told of how certain politico-ritual offices came to be transferred from one clan to another. The tale is so stereotyped that it can be regarded as a standard myth. It is alleged of several of the lesser chiefships that they were originally vested in different clans from those that now hold them—usually clans that are closely related to the present holders by local or ritual ties. The last chief of the original line, the myth relates, had his sister's son, a member of the clan now holding the chiefship, living with him. The chief put great trust in his *ahəŋ*; and, either because he had no sons or because his sons were indifferent to politico-ritual affairs, the chief always delegated his *ahəŋ* to represent him. Thus, he used to send the *ahəŋ* as his messenger whenever he had to communicate with the senior chief who was the elector to that chiefship. In this way the *ahəŋ* became known to the elector. When his *ahəb* died he hastened stealthily to the elector with the news, taking lavish gifts along with him. Knowing him so well from their previous contacts and persuaded by the rich gifts he brought, the elector thereupon immediately conferred the chiefship on him. Thus the chiefship came into the possession of its present holders. A similar story is told to explain the dominant position of the lineage of Lakum yiri in the politico-ritual structure of Ba'ari, in spite of their being an attached lineage.[1]

When it is pointed out that such actions are contrary to custom and would not be allowed at present, the natives have two answers. Firstly, they say, unscrupulous people never hesitate to break a customary rule

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 88.

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shrine they accompany us and listen to what we say. Will they not 869
[thus] get to know it?' His own small son Badiwona (6–7 years) is 861
extremely devoted to him. One day, affectionately patting the child, 828
he said: 'When we come out in the morning, and if he doesn't see [593]
me, he seeks about for me. If he doesn't find me he won't rest. That is why I had him initiated last year. Whatever I do he also sits and listens. Will he not get to know it thus? And when I am gone will he not say that when he was a child he used to go about with his father and used to see how his father did this and that? This is my child and I am teaching him uprightness. If he is about to do anything that is not seemly I tell him, so that when he grows up he will know upright ways.'[1]

Education, it is clear, is regarded as a joint enterprise in which 861
parents are as eager to lead as children to follow. In consequence of 856
this attitude adults are very tolerant of children's ways and especially about their learning. A child is never forced beyond its capacity. This is seen most clearly in relation to the pivotal economic activity, agriculture. However skilful a boy may be with his hoe, he will not be forced to do as much work as an adult. Men often restrain their sons of 12–14 from joining the adults in hoeing on the grounds that over-exertion is harmful. Again, women do not take daughters of 9–10 on firewood expeditions to the bush.

That skill comes with practice is realized by all. When adults are 868
asked about children's mimetic play they reply: 'That is how they learn.' Thus when a boy is 7 or 8 his father buys him a small bow so that he can go and learn marksmanship in play with his comrades. Yet the existence of individual differences in ability, both amongst children and amongst adults, is recognized and cited with reference to the acquisition of skill. Rapid learning or the acquisition of a new skill is explained by *u mar nini pam*, 'he has eyes remarkably', that is, he is very sharp. A friend of mine who was a cap-maker told me how he had learnt his craft, as a youth, from a Dagban by carefully watching him at work. When he was young, he explained, he had 'very good eyes'. This conception of cleverness is intelligible in a society where learning by looking and copying is the commonest manner of achieving dexterity both in crafts and in the everyday manual activities.

[1] He learns—*u bamhora*, cognate with *bay*, to know; I teach him—*mpaanuwi*.

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571 861 siblings, half-siblings, and ortho-cousins of close agnatic kinship from the same joint family or sublineage group. The composition of a children's group depends upon various factors. The most important of these are the following:

561 857 *Age and mobility.* Infants still requiring care are often carried about by boys and girls attached to a group of older children. Generally speaking, children of the same degree of mobility tend to go about together. Thus one often finds a group comprising children of about 6 to 10 years. But the stage of social development reached by a child is important in this connexion. Hence young children under 10–11, children between 10–11 and the beginning of pubescence, and adolescents all tend to form separate groups.

571 857 462 *Sex.* Before the age of about 6 years small boys very frequently go about with girls' groups, and small girls, though more rarely, accompany older brothers. After that age as mobility increases and interests diverge the sexes tend to separate. A well-defined sexual dichotomy runs through Tale social life and thought, and the children begin to adopt the cultural definitions of the roles of the sexes in relation to each other about the time that single-sex groups become common. This is associated with a differentiation of their activities on the periphery of the economic system. Thus cowherds are always boys, whereas it is the girls who help with the housekeeping.

571 857 *The social situation.* Yet none of these children's groups resemble gangs. They have no permanent structure. They generally crystallize out in particular situations and the composition of a group depends largely upon the situation. In ritual situations one often finds a somewhat amorphous group of children and young people of a wide age-range. In games and imaginative play, however, it is more usual to meet with small groups of restricted age-range. Pairs and trios of either sex and of nearly the same age, who are almost always siblings or ortho-cousins, often have a more lasting companionship in work and play and provide a nucleus for larger temporary groups, especially in the dry season.

593 861 858 The most fundamental educational relationship of the Tallensi is, however, not that of children to children but of children to parents. It is a complex relationship, as defined in Tale culture, but its principal moments can be readily discerned. On the plane of rational, everyday

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economic and social activities there is co-operation, friendliness and tolerance, almost equality. This is more marked between father and child than between mother and child. A father is always addressed by his personal name, a mother is always called *mma*, my mother. Affectively, however, a powerful tension exists between parent and child. A parent's authority may not be flouted, though he or she is expected to be affectionate and indulgent. Sin, in Tale ideology, is primarily an offence against the person, status, or rights of the living parents, or the parent-images—the ancestor spirits.

The structure of this relationship makes it possible for children to acquiesce immediately in the commands and teachings of their parents or parent-substitutes. Children are, as a rule, very obedient. If they refuse to carry out an order there is usually some very valid reason—acknowledged as such by both parents and children—such as that it is some one else's turn. But the parent-child relationship is educationally fundamental in another sense—it is the paradigm of all moral relationships.

It is worth noting, by contrast, that the relationship between grandparent and grandchild is the reverse of that between parent and child. In this case equality, compatibility and partisanship, as if in league against the generation between them, are emphasized, more particularly by the joking relationship—mutual ragging among the Talensi—permitted between grandparent and grandchild.

The social space. How these relationships function in the educational development of a Tale child is determined by its social space.[1] An individual's social space is a product of that segment of the social structure and that segment of the habitat with which he or she is in effective contact. To put it in another way, the social space is the society in its ecological setting seen from the individual's point of view. The individual creates his social space but is himself in turn formed by it. On the one hand, his range of experiences and behaviour are controlled by his social space, and on the other, everything he learns causes it to expand and become more differentiated. In the lifetime of the individual it changes *pari passu* with his psycho-physical and social development.

[1] This term is employed here for want of an apter one. It has been used in a different sense by Simmel and others.

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183 ing the correct observances has many points in common with learning
867 skills, but there is a significant difference. When a child is learning a skill he has the test of objective achievement to evaluate his progress and to stimulate him to further effort; when he is learning how to behave properly the only test of attainment is the reaction of other people and his own sense of the adequacy or inadequacy of his conduct.
[626] One can observe, in consequence, that both children and adults are very sensitive to ridicule of a lapse in manners or morals but are fairly indifferent to ridicule of poor skill. The contrast between observances and skills is evident when we compare the way in which a child learns to model clay figures, gradually perfecting his technique, with the 'all or none' way, associated sometimes with corporal punishment, in which he is taught to respect other people's property, or the way he is taught his totemic taboos.

867 Among the Tallensi, as in many other primitive societies, manners and morals are acquired almost as a by-product of the normal social relations between the growing child and the people who constitute his or her social space. The unity of the social sphere and the expectation of normal behaviour have a correspondingly greater influence than in the acquisition of skills and interests. But the critical factor is the tension inherent in the fundamental educational relationships, the authority of parent over child and of senior over junior.

861 In Tale ideology this is epitomized in the danger attributed to a
593 parent's resentment. If any one who has reached years of discretion behaves in such a way as to incur the resentment and hostility of a parent, some calamity will certainly befall him or her unless he comes formally to beg forgiveness and the injured parent ritually abjures his or her anger.[1] It very often happens that two children of about the same age and members of a single joint family are related as parent and child. They can be seen playing together amicably, squabbling at times, and working together. But when the 'child' is questioned about his playmate, he will say: *nzorumi, on ndɔyam la zugu*, 'I fear (respect) him, because he begot me.' This is not merely a formula. Sinkawol (aged 23–5) used to order his 'father', Kyekambe (aged

[1] The connexion between one particular aspect of Tale morality, their notion of incest, and the background of kinship has been discussed in my paper on 'Kinship, Incest and Exogamy', loc. cit.

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12–13) about when the lad was helping with the housebuilding and even scold him if he bungled a task. This was legitimate technical instruction. But he declared emphatically that he dare not strike the boy, *on ndɔyam la zugu*. From the authority of parent over child is derived that of elder sibling over younger. It is equally absolute. A youth or girl has no hesitation in restraining or correcting a younger sibling with a cuff which often sends the latter off howling at the top of his voice. The authority of seniors in general over juniors is accepted by custom (e.g., among herdboys), though not so absolutely and unquestioningly. It is often maintained by force, or in virtue of superior skill. It is intelligible, therefore, why the Tallensi usually say *ti banam yel nla*, 'our forefathers' matter is this' when they are asked to account for an observance, and why their children say, *bunkɔra la yel ti la gwala*, 'the grown-ups have told us so'.

Just as all Tallensi, children or adults, recognize the force of authority, even though they sometimes flout it, so they accept the principle of equal rights for equals. One can see this, not only in standardized patterns of behaviour, but, e.g., in the spontaneity with which children share things and activities. When a small boy snares a bird or kills a mouse or lizard he will always share his catch with friends or siblings, apportioning it according to sex and age. A favourite pastime of boys of all ages, from 5 upwards, is wrestling. Sometimes bigger youths stand by to supervise, but always scrupulous fairness is insisted upon, and thus instilled. It is as correct and even praiseworthy to demand what one is entitled to as it is reprehensible to take what one has no right to. A nice illustration, showing incidentally how such principles are sometimes taught, came to my notice during an evening ceremony which had been unduly dragged out. A dozen or more small boys aged from 5 upwards had gathered at the ceremony to wait for a share of the feast which would follow the religious rites. The food was sent out and distributed by an adult, one or two boys of equal size to a dish. Suddenly an elder called out, 'Where is Zuur?' (a small boy of about 5) and rose to look for him. Zuur lay fast asleep in a corner. The old man shook the child roughly to awaken him, and dragged him towards a dish of food upbraiding him, 'Where do you think you will find food after it has all been eaten? You can't control yourself at all.' Zuur, still